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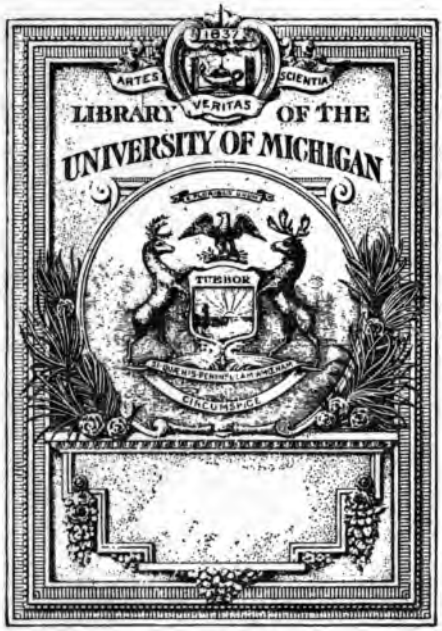
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John A. Hassell

Newport
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Alan R. S. Hall

4

THE MOBILE BOER

His Honor, President S. J. P. Kruger

MOBILE BOER

JOHN A. [illegible]
Capt.

NEW YORK
GRAFTON PRESS

His Honor, President S. J. P. Kruger

ER

PRESS

THE MOBILE BOER

BEING THE RECORD OF
THE OBSERVATIONS OF
TWO BURGHER OFFICERS

BY
ALAN R. H. HILEY
and
JOHN A. HASSELL
Captains of Scouts
in the Boer Army

NEW YORK
THE GRAFTON PRESS

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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO
HIS HONOR
PRESIDENT STEPHANUS JOHANNES PAULUS KRUGER,
THE BELOVED AND TRUSTED LEADER
OF HIS PEOPLE,
WITH THE EARNEST HOPE
THAT HE MAY BE SPARED TO SEE,
IN THE NEW BIRTH
OF A FREE AND UNITED COUNTRY,
THE FULFILLMENT OF
HIS LIFE'S WORK

424438

PRAYER OF THE BOERS

By permission of the New York *World*.

I

God of the helpless! Lo we seek
At Thy dread throne a just redress;
Lord, succor us, for we are weak,
And strong the foemen who oppress!

II

In Afric wilds our fathers sought
The freedom that their sons enjoy;
In tropic jungles slowly wrought
The homes the tyrant would destroy.

III

For since his longing, lusting eyes
Have caught the glitter of our soil,
His mission is to civilize,
And, civilizing, to despoil.

IV

Lord, when our helpless cities burn,
Our rivers red with carnage run,
Let not the mocking heart discern
Thy hand behind the heavier gun!

V

Heed not, O Lord, the promise glib,
The blunt petition of the strong;
O Thou who smote Sennacherib,
Be potent still to smite the wrong!

VI

Behold, their far-famed navies come
Near and more near with every breeze.
Lord, suffer not our martyrdom.
The ships are theirs—but Thine the seas!
Hear us, and, as in days of old,
Lord, smite the worshippers of gold!

—Nixola Greely-Smith.

MARTHINUS T. STEYN, PRESIDENT OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE

PREFACE

IT is our intention in these pages to deal with the Boer-English war and the events which actually transpired as we had opportunity to see them. The fact of our being in the Republican forces,—born foreigners—the tone of the descriptions of stirring incidents, and the citation of injustice and cruelty must exempt us from the reproach of prejudice.

The right of the Boer cause we can leave in the hands of such exponents as State Secretary Reitz,* Charles Boissevan, Dr. Van der Vlugt, and foreigners such as Mr. W. T. Stead with his "Stop the War" publications, Mr. W. H. Methuen's "Peace or War," Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. John Morley, and many other prominent Englishmen who have dared to raise their voices against a national crime. This testimony has proved the Boer oppressed, and forced to act on the defensive. Out of the mouths of her ministers and those responsible for this act of aggression, England has entered this war admittedly without *casus belli.*

We should like to remind our American brothers of the events that America's greatness grew from. Not that they have forgotten, but with time and distance they recognize no parallel between the British war of 1775-

* Reitz's "A Century of Injustice."

Dr. Van der Vlugt, Professor of Leyden University: "Transvaal versus Great Britain."

Charles Boissevan, Editor of "Het Algemeen Handelsblad," and author of "The Struggle of the Dutch Republics," "An Open Letter to the Duke of Devonshire."

W. T. Stead's "Stop the War," "How to Make Peace," "The Truth About the War," "Shall I Slay my Brother Boer?" Supplied by the "Stop the War" Committee, Clock House, Arundel Street, Strand, London.

1779 and the Boer-British war of 1899-19— How many Americans will now calmly remark: "Why don't they give in, they are whipped, they can't win?" It is forgotten that Louis Botha, Christian De Wet and De la Rey have more men at present fighting under their united command, than Washington, at the commencement of the Rebellion of 1776, at the evacuation of New York, or in the disastrous winter of Valley Forge 1777-78. Such an expression would have caused a very different result if Washington had permitted the counsel of the same sort of Americans to have his ear. And it sounds a little smug in these days of splendid prosperity, sprung from the "Never-Yields" of the Rebellion.

The American-English and the Boer-English wars are exact parallels in all but that one was a rebellion of a colony, and the other the attempt of a free people to maintain their independence. Every American is or should be familiar with the history, and traditions of his country, but we wish to set these outlines before the readers that advocate the submission of these true republicans who refuse to surrender to the supremacy of Great Britain.

In both wars we have the same country, the same Tory government, faced by the same weak and divided opposition called Whigs or Liberals. England has her North in Lord Salisbury, her Wedderburn, Thurlow and Rigby in Joseph Chamberlain, David Balfour, St. John Broderick. In their championship of the oppressed and wronged we find Charles James Fox and Lord Chatham replaced by John Morley and Sir Edward Clarke. Opposite Burke's fearless letters, we find W. T. Stead and Frederick Harrison carrying on the same noble campaign in an attempted salvation of their country. The war now is conducted in the same manner as that of 1776, the same base calumnies of the enemy, the same alleged bar-

barities, and atrocities against a foe without counsel before the world's tribunal, the same proclamations alternately offering glowing terms of surrender or threatening dire consequences in case of further resistance, the same burning, and desolation of homes and the same cruelty, murder, confiscation of property, in the furtherance of their national desires. They now use the savage Kaffirs against the Boer as they used the Indian against the colonials, they use similar lying methods to deceive their own people as to their reverses and the condition of their own troops, and they are attempting the same extermination of an independent race by fire, famine and outrage, with the same ultimate result—a new and young republic that will spring forth from the ashes of the desolation.

New York, December, 1901.

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THE MOBILE BOER

Chapter I

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ON October 6, 1899 most of the Republican forces were concentrated at Zandspruit fifteen miles north of the Natal boundary on the Durban-Johannesburg railroad. The burghers arrived daily by wagon or train according to the accessibility of the district to which they belonged. The country was an undulating plain intersected by the river, making an ideal camping ground. The wagons were placed in parks, the oxen and the horses sent out to herd on the neighboring range in care of the Kaffir servants, and the Boer settled at once into the camp life with which he was so familiar.

Government supplies were scarce, but every burgher had his never-failing *biltong,* (dried game meat) bread and coffee sufficient for ten days. The greetings and the hospitality displayed gave more the impression of a large Texas camp-meeting than a call to arms to resist an attempt upon their national independence. Stories of the English might and wealth were exchanged. Reminiscences among the veterans of the '81 war were repeated to the younger men, but Lyddite, the new and unknown English explosive was the chief topic of con-

jecture. Many wondrous stories were told, gathered from the English press, of the destructiveness of this new agent in warfare. Instances were given of herds of sheep so decimated by a single shell, that no trace remained; of mountains removed, but one old Takhar reached the climax of credulity by stating that an English acquaintance had told him that if Lyddite, when shot at a hill failed to find Boers, it jumped consecutively to other hills until Boers were discovered, then exploding to the destruction of every living Dutchman in the vicinity.

Botha pass, the northwest gate to Natal, had already been occupied by General Jan Kock and Commandant Ben Viljoen. Their command of 1,200 men consisted of the Johannesburg Commando and the German and Holland corps of volunteers.

General Lukas Meyer was at Jagers Drift on the Buffalo river guarding the northeast passage from Natal with two thousand federals from the southwest district of the Transvaal.

The main column under General Schalk Burger, and Daniel Erasmus were at Volkrust, their force approximating 9,000 men. Thus the three important northern passages from Natal into the Transvaal were guarded, while two nations waited for the word that was to loose the combatants.

The Johannesburg Police were watching the exodus of foreigners from the Rand district, which had commenced on the fifth instant and was taxing the limited accommodations of the railroad to the utmost; consequently all the columns were without any sort of supplies except the food brought by the provident hunter from his home. On October the seventh the British government issued the order for the mobilization of the army reserve. Then the Transvaal government with the approval of the

Orange Free State, despatched on the ninth instant its now famous ultimatum. The last doubt of the presence of war had been dissipated and the little army on the Zand river within sight of Majuba, the monument to their independence, was schooling itself to do and die with the full consciousness that it stood on the verge of the greatest struggle yet endured by the country to preserve its nationality. There was an absence of excitement. The Boers, disliking war and unwarlike, but reserved and deliberate, realized that it was a struggle to the death, and that the task before them, if accomplished, would be dearly bought.

After the ultimatum Commandant-General Piet Joubert who had been assisting the government with his counsel, joined the main column. There everything was done to force the working order of the commissariat, which department, called into existence within the week, previously possessing no stock, was making tremendous efforts to furnish the farmers with necessary food-stuffs and clothing by levying on the merchants for the supplies needed. But the chaos was so complete that they never satisfactorily effected their task in the first six months of the war, the forces being in a continual state of feast or famine, and only supplied at all by strenuous hustling of their individual commanders.

The government had already appointed five generals to assist the commandant-general. They were Piet Cronje, a well-known fearless fighter who had to his credit the siege and capture of Potchefstroom in the Boer-English war of '81, and the capture of Dr. Jameson and his force in the English raid of '96, also Lukas Meyer who had seen a great deal of service in Kaffir wars. But their knowledge was afterwards proven to be of little service to their country when arrayed against an or-

ganized army equipped with an inexhaustible supply of the sinews of war.

Schalk Burger, Daniel Erasmus and Jan Kock, the other three, were chosen from the Volksraad, more on account of their being leaders of the people in times of peace, than for any military ability they were supposed to possess. The lesser officers consisting of the commandants and veldkornets were chosen by the burghers by the simplest form of ballot, to serve periods of five and three years respectively.

The commandant generally constituted the military chief of three or four districts. He was their leader in times of war, aided by the veldkornets, one of whom was elected from each district. In times of peace the commandant often held some office in the district court, or was a member of the Volksraad, the House of Representatives of the districts. The veldkornet filled an office equivalent to that of sheriff, serving writs, administering justice below the higher court; and kept the statistics of the fighting force in his district, available for military duty, to repel and punish Kaffir invasions.

In war times they were both liable to be deposed at any period by a majority of the burghers of their command serving with the fighting force. It has been contended that where the leader is the servant, successful and aggressive military operations are impossible, and that the ballot is no method of finding suitable officers, that individual popularity would be liable to take the precedent, the justice of the peace would fail at the head of a storming party, and, in an army where duty was voluntary, the commandant that assigned the least amount of work would continue in office.

In the earlier part of the war, when the true significance of the struggle was yet dawning, some such condi-

tion may have existed. But that the Boer in the ranks could discern his country's welfare is instanced by this same system bringing to the surface Louis Botha, Christian De Wet, De la Rey, Ben Viljoen Theron, Brand Hertzog, Kritzinger, Scheepers and other heroes too numerous to mention. This system has also relegated to a subordinate position many of high character, deficient in the qualities essential to leadership, and in most cases, without bitterness of feeling resulting.

Under the veldkornets we have the corporals, also, chosen by ballot. These commanded from fifteen to twenty-five men and were subject to reduction in the same manner as their superiors. For instance, the popularity of some individual corporal might increase his command, but the veldkornet must then of necessity intervene by spliting the corporalship in twain. The corporal who found his command waning in favor of others would quietly drop his title and take his place in the ranks.

The corporals were responsible for picket duty, each having to furnish a certain percentage of men, allotting the duty as his view of justice prompted. For this reason a willing cook was always exempt from duty beyond camp, and certain unwarlike burghers saw no service but were willing to take good care of those more inclined to court the chances of the skirmish or battle-field.

The burgher was compelled by law to hold himself continually in a prepared state to combat the hostilities of the Kaffirs. For such service he had to be in possession at any and all times of a horse, saddle, rifle, bandolier and ammunition, with fourteen days provisions. He also had to submit himself and equipment to periodical inspections by the Commandant of his district. The gun, bandolier and ammunition were supplied by the government and remained in the burghers' possession. So that

at the outbreak of this war every adult was fully armed without encroaching on the reserve in the Pretoria arsenal. The greater number were armed with Martini-Henri's, preferring that rifle for the hunting of game. But they were given the choice of turning it in to the government and receiving a Mauser rifle in exchange, an opportunity of which many availed themselves.

This was the formation of an army which has fathered so many daring leaders and brought forth individual deeds of heroism hard to equal. Without any military fanfare or hopes of personal reward in medal or kind, a man in a few months has sprung from a bullock whip to a command, died without recognition, often without burial. No record was kept of the steps he climbed or the death he died, nothing but the consciousness of a duty performed and the fond memory cherished by his companions, many of whom followed his footsteps.

One of the first efforts at organization with the government was to make arrangements to feed and clothe the families of the burghers too poor to leave them any material support in money. Such an arrangement was effected in a few days, relieving the men at the front from any anxiety in connection with their kin. Any family desiring, was able to draw rations sufficient for their support, and further, receive free medical attendance, and house room, all rents being canceled during the war by special act of the Volksraad.

With the rumble of war in their ears and guided by the distribution of the troops, the government began to realize the size of the movement necessary to protect their extensive borders nearly hemmed by British territory. To assist in getting some order in the forces six additional generals were appointed to the threatened districts. Hendrik Snyman joined Cronje's forces on the

MAJUBA HILL

western border; De la Rey, R. Lemmer and H. Schoeman went to the southwest border of the Orange Free State and Sarel Du Toit took command of the Zoutspansberg district in the extreme northeast of the Transvaal and General Grobler joined the forces on the border of Natal.

After the time limit had elapsed for the reply to the Republican note and the extreme hope of arbitration was killed, the entire Boer forces took part in services where the army solemnly prayed for success, and the triumph of right, with a short campaign. The laagers had been prepared for an advance and the border was crossed at three points simultaneously. Laings Nek, was guarded on the west by Majuba Hill and on the east by Pogwani heights, two rugged mountains which towered above the Nek, (pass) and were both situated on British territory. Laings Nek tunnel on the Natal government railroad was between the hills, and the whole formed a most important strategical position.

Almost immediately orders were given to mount a 155 millimeter Creusot siege gun on the crest of the Majuba which is accepted as an engineering feat of some magnitude. This action demonstrates that the Boer military leaders never contemplated the possibility of immediately overrunning Northern Natal, or of the rapid withdrawal of the British troops. The pass being on British territory, its possession was considered vital to protect the level stretch of prairie between the Natal border and Johannesburg, a country, as they well knew, unsuited to the protective warfare, they would be compelled to use against superior numbers.

Proceeding cautiously along the route of the railroad, the Federals felt their way toward Newcastle. The country, mountainous and broken, presented splendid oppor-

tunities to inflict a severe blow on a force straggling over a bad road. But the information at this time was very accurate, the Boer scouts and sympathizers passing freely between the territory invaded and the Republican armies.

From the preparations made at the Hattingspruit siding and other advance posts it was evident the British had intended to advance. It was therefore with surprise and expectation that the Federals continuously occupied, on the thirteenth, the small hamlets of Spitzkop, Charlestown, and Ingogo without any opposition except the few shots exchanged between the advance guards and the British outposts as they fell back.

On the fourteenth, Newcastle was entered. A portion of the inhabitants fleeing hurriedly before this unexpected invasion. They had the assurance from the British general that they were not within the area likely to be operated in, and were therefore seized with panic on the appearance of their enemies, the force who were to protect them falling back on Hattingspruit. A majority of the residents remained, being demonstratively in favor of the invaders, offering the tired men what hospitality was within their power, and mounting the Republican flag, the older men and women recalling the day it waved undisputed over the same territory.

The weather was simply fearful,—either a drenching rain or a steady drizzling mist. Very few fortunate ones possessed a rain-coat and the inconvenience was considerable. The commissariat with dry clothes and food was far behind, making scarcely any progress. The creeks were swollen and boggy, the roads were narrow and bad. One broken or stalled vehicle would hold the train for hours, until the delayed and impatient teamsters would lift it bodily out of the narrow roadway and throw it

on the bank. The wagons of the different commands were separated and the men of other districts having troubles of their own were chary of any aid to strangers, and so paid no attention to a disconsolate crew sitting in the rain upon their possessions, waiting for a wagon of their own laager to re-load the now sodden mass from the roadside.

There was no regulation as to condition of loads and draught of the conveyances. Consequently these accidents were frequent, and the army outmarched the camp thirty miles in the first two days, which necessitated forty-eight hours stay in Newcastle. In spite of being hungry and wet through, there was no looting done in these towns. Everything taken from the stores was paid for, and the option of being under a roof was gratefully accepted. The entire transport arrived on the sixteenth, and, regardless of weather, the saddlebags were filled with available supplies. Then the army with the artillery again pushed on, leaving the wagons to follow in their own good time.

Ingagane was passed with no incident. But at Besterplaats on the eighteenth, the first determined resistance was offered by a regiment of cavalry employed as mounted infantry, and the guards on the railroad.

The Republicans, after a sharp skirmish, attempted to surround the garrison, but they slipped away, leaving the passage open to Danhauser, which village was reached that night, and again there was a halt made for supplies. The country continued of a broken character, but was already showing signs of becoming more open. The hills were less rugged and the valleys wider, increasing the mobility of both armies and transports.

Hattingspruit was occupied on the twentieth after a second slight resistance. The British again fell back

and the Republican main column was knocking at the door of Dundee, the advance post of the enemy, which was known to be held in force with General Penn-Symons in command.

The halt for the night in the Republican camp had peculiar features. When the wagons arrived, the separate laagers formed different camping grounds. Space and convenience to water were more regarded than any order or system of defence. Each burgher singled out the wagon that carried his individual possessions, and assisted, as the case might be, in either outspanning the oxen or unharnessing the mules, which were then taken by the Kaffir servant to water and grass. These natives were attached to each wagon and their duty was to be responsible for the safety and care of the work animals in their charge.

The ridden horses were then released, the burgher unsaddling close to his wagon in the spot he intended to sleep. Every horse carried a halter with a rawhide strap attached. One of his forelegs would be raised and the strap securely fastened above the knee. With both forefeet on the ground his neck was necessarily drawn down, which position restrained him from walking fast or running. This was called knee-haltering, and being easier and more merciful than other methods, was generally used in South Africa, the hobble being rarely applied. It facilitated capture, although in no way interfering with the liberty of the animal to eat or drink. A burgher never rode more than three or four hours without "offsaddling" to allow his horse to graze. Then the kneehalter would be utilized to give both man and beast the required freedom.

The horses disposed of, pots, pans and blankets were unloaded, and the latter would be dried while a meal

A Typical Boer

was in preparation. The veldt bake-oven or ant-heap, a natural combustible, would be sought. After breaking the top for a draught and placing lighted kindling in a hole dug in the side, it would consume itself until the dough was made, when the ashes were removed and the bread placed in the cavity. By then stopping each orifice, the oven was complete. Now they collected the fuel to cook the meat and boil the water for the coffee, and thus a simple meal was soon completed. After withdrawing the bread a second batch was placed in the oven for the following day, and the cares for the inner man were over.

At dusk the Kaffirs returned with the stock, when the oxen, mules and horses would be tied by rawhide thongs to ropes drawn between adjacent wagons. The pickets were then placed by the corporals, divine service was held, fires allowed to die, and the laager retired to rest.

Chapter II

Dundee threatened—Talana Hill—Death of Penn-Symons—Armistice—Khaki in war—Arrival of Erasmus—Impati mountain—Attacks in closed formation—Volley fire—Retreat to Ladysmith—Dundee—Defective time fuse—Capture of 18th Hussars—The military spoils—Loot—Restitution—Ammunition, Nickel, Dum-Dum and Soft nosed—Official correspondence—Plans of campaign—Use of natives.

GENERAL KOCK who commanded the forces at Botha's pass had outmarched the centre and reached Elandslaagte with his advance guard, on the nineteenth, where a provision train became an easy capture. The train and railroad was then destroyed, with the direct telegraph between Ladysmith and the British force at Dundee.

The Orange Free State burghers, following the Harrismith-Ladysmith railroad, had driven in the outposts between this track and the Tugela river, and by defeating the Natal Carbineers at Besters Station were threatening Ladysmith on the west.

With General Kock between the two British garrisons, General Lukas Meyer moving southwest from Jagers Drift, and General Erasmus with the main column, following the railroad, laboriously, mile by mile from the north, the position of the British forces at Dundee began to look serious.

The Republican generals decided to make a simultaneous attack on the garrison with the entire converging forces, each to attack on the side his force threatened, and General Meyer following this arrangement took possession of Talana hill northeast of the town. This hill was about 400 feet above the valley and of a rugged, broken nature. About half way up there was a

stratum ot rock forming a separate crest or terrace, which, while giving the Republicans a second line of defence to repel the assault, blanketed the fire from the summit.

The mist was very thick, covering the movements of the opposing forces. The Republicans being numerically weak, were unable to defend the entire area, and the British succeeded in effecting a lodgement on the terrace. On the side stormed, the plateau had a farm-house with a grove of trees below it. Again above the farm a stone wall ran laterally. It was to this wall the burghers retreated on losing the first crest. But the Imperialists with the aid of the trees and farm outhouses again succeeded in forcing the Federal position, which then retreated to the top of the mountain, determined to contest it to the last, in the hope of the reinforcements arriving from the other columns, to engage the enemy in the rear.

The Republican Vicker's Maxim had been placed *hors de combat* by the artillery fire and Lieutenant Du Toit in charge, severely injured, receiving no fewer than eleven shrapnel and two rifle wounds. But strange to relate, although crippled for life, he actually survived.

The ammunition for the three field guns became exhausted, leaving the burghers no resource but their rifles with which to stem the surging tide of British advance. So effectual was this fire that the attacking force was staggered and, it seemed, at one time, would be annihilated. At the wall, which alone afforded suitable protection, General Penn-Symons could be plainly seen while he delivered his orders, and encouraged his men. When it is remembered that the sword, the certain death-warrant of the British officer in this war had not yet been discarded, it is no wonder that he fell. But the burghers soon realized that without artillery it was beyond human power to hold the brow of the hill against the terrible

rain of shrapnel showered on them, and after a final heroic but unsuccessful effort to dislodge the troops at the wall, they evacuated the most advanced points, leaving not only the coveted position in possession of the enemy, but a clear right of way to the top.

The successor of Penn-Symons sent in a flag of truce to Lukas Meyer with a demand to surrender, which was declined. But being without ammunition, despairing of the promised reinforcements, and also shocked at his heavy losses, he submitted a counter proposal, embracing a twenty-four hours' armistice, to enable him to bury his dead, which the British accepted conditionally on his withdrawing across the Buffalo river.

Of retiring dispositions and extremely sensitive natures, these devoutly Christian farmers were by their early training eminently fitted for war, yet unwarlike withal. They had a horror of anything which implied the abandonment of their dead to the enemy. There is not the least shadow of doubt that these, to us mistaken ideas of humanity, were responsible for a number of grievous disasters. Almost any advantage would be conceded so long as they were permitted to recover their beloved fallen ones, and a perfect knowledge of this Boer trait, call it weakness or virtue as you prefer, of which General Joubert was at once the disciple and the embodiment, enabled General White, commander at Ladysmith to snatch many a fresh lease of life, without which he must surely have succumbed, and that could not have failed to have been the case had he been opposed by a combatant who was more of a soldier than a Christian.

This was the first severe engagement of the war and the burghers gave promise of maintaining their past prowess. Fighting deliberately without emotion, coolly adjusting the sights of their rifles, and aiming carefully

they contested every position until it became utterly hopeless, when they would fall back to the first available cover to again assume the defensive. In this battle, in which the Republicans sustained a loss of thirty-seven killed and ninety-six wounded, many splendid exhibitions of heroism were displayed. A notable instance being that of the tragic end of the two commandants of the Wakkerstroom commando, Jan Uys, son of the old pioneer warrior, Piet Uys, and Hendrik Slabbert, both veterans of the first war of independence in '81, who wounded and bleeding at the defence of the wall, and unable to walk, refused to be carried away, preferring to die fighting with their guns in their hands. With jaws set and eyes fixed on the advancing infantry they lay together, shooting unflinchingly, until, riddled with bullets and incapable of further resistance, they received the *coup de grace* of the bayonet.

The burghers deplored that they suffered a tremendous disadvantage from the difficulty with which the British in his khaki uniform was distinguished from the red-brown color of the stones, ground and grass. It was remarked that even the field guns, ammunition wagons and maxims were disguised in the cloak of this inconvenient and practically invisible color. Very few realize, and it is doubtful whether even the enemy conceived the extent of the tremendous advantage in their favor, in both moving troops by stealth or at night, and more important still, its effect on the sum total of their losses. From our own experience in the field we modestly hazard the opinion that, had England's soldiers been uniformed in this war as they had been in past wars, the history of Lord Roberts' march and General Buller's campaigns would have formed entirely different reading to that which we now attempt to record.

That night Erasmus arrived too late to be of any assistance, the reason of his delay being given as the difficulty he experienced in crossing the fords with his guns. Taking possession of Impati mountain he went into bivouac, the army thoroughly weary with the continuous labor of helping the artillery through the swollen creeks.

The British moved their camp to protect themselves from this newly threatened danger, but in the morning the Federals again took possession of Talana hill, and after a six hours attempt of the enemy to dislodge them, the attack was abandoned, and the British fell back on the slope southeast of Dundee, having 500 dead and wounded as a result of the two days operations.

They had attempted the storming of the hills by advancing in close order and they met a fire so withering and concentrated that they utterly failed in reaching an effective position. All their fire was in volleys, and for the most part harmless. The burghers would remain concealed until the volley was fired, when quickly rising at the sound, they reappeared the instant the danger was past to pour an accurate and deadly stream of independent fire into the British infantry, who, incapable of taking advantage of the natural cover, stood in parade order. The front rank reclined, the second knelt, and the third stood erect, broken only by the gaps made by the appalling fire.

The burghers lost but few men under these conditions, while the English loss was heavy. To these farmers, who are naturally of a gentle disposition and willing to take advantage of every cover for their own personal protection, the idea of any discipline that would force men to become victims of such a mistaken system seemed suicidal.

The English under General Yule slipped away that night over Sunday river in full retreat to Ladysmith, leaving the tents standing, table spread, dead unburied, also deserting their wounded and vast quantities of government stores in the railroad yard, including two engines, rolling stock, and fully equipped machine-shops. The burghers cared for the wounded and buried the dead among whom was General Penn-Symons, who was buried in the folds of the Union Jack and otherwise received the honors befitting his rank.

A pathetic incident of this battle was the discovery of an unopened telegram addressed to the dead general from his wife, in which she congratulated him upon the victory the English had already cabled to London. With deep feeling, General Joubert was among the first to cable the news of her husband's death to the bereaved wife. In his message he offered his sincere condolences and paid a Christian tribute to the honor of the dead man.

There were the usual incidents necessary to an untrained and undisciplined army in action for the first time. Whole commandos were lost or failed to take the position assigned to them, Christian Joubert, grandnephew of the commandant-general, with nine of his companions became separated from their command, in the mist. The topography of the country was unknown to them, and while dashing wildly through a short sluit they ran into a body of British infantry, preparing to storm Impati mountain. They were immediately made prisoners and disarmed, then tied by one hand to the ammunition wagon of the maxim, and forced to accompany it on a run to every position it occupied. To add to their discomfort their suspenders were even cut, and to be able to keep up with the gun, they were compelled

to hold up their breeches with their free hands, and they were stimulated in their efforts by the butts of the guns in the hands of their captors, who thought no abuse was too severe for these unfortunate prisoners who belonged to a race that dared to administer reverses to the "finest army on earth." Fortunately, the maxim was captured by the Boers and the men released. An officer, incensed at the loss, galloped back toward the prisoners apparently to despatch them, but as he pointed his pistol a stray bullet shattered his arm, and with a curse he rode after his fleeing companions. The bruises on the backs and shoulders of Joubert and the others bore eloquent testimony that their treatment had been as brutal as the most pronounced canon of the doctrine of war could defend.

If General Erasmus had forced an advance after the British fell back, their demoralization was so complete that he could not have failed to cut off their retreat and capture their entire force. But in consideration of the condition of misery to which the burghers had been reduced by hunger and wet, he failed to push the advantage, and General Yule escaped without vigorously effective pursuit.

The Boers formed their camp close to the river and man and beast got some sadly needed rest. The first burst of sunshine during the campaign partly dried the ground and relieved, with a ray of warmth, the aching bones and sodden exterior of the over-taxed forces who alternated eating with foraging excursions to the late British camp and Dundee.

In this engagement few of the shells used by the Boers exploded, the time-fuse being defective and breaking on discharge of the gun. This fault was not remedied until the following February, making a difference in the

BOER WAGONS AT DUNDEE

mortality of the enemy that cannot be easily exaggerated. It occurred in all the ammunition of the Krupp seventy-five millimetre and the 155 millimetre Creusot, with a consistency causing a suspicion of design as the ammunition of the seventy-five millimeter Creusot was free from this defect.

A body of 260 British cavalry from Dundee composed of the Eighteenth Hussars and mounted infantry, under Colonel Moller, had been sent out to reconnoitre on the first day's battle of Talana hill. Passing through the gap which General Erasmus was supposed to have occupied and missing the Boer main column, they wandered to the east and became completely lost in the rain, until discovered four miles in the rear of the Boer advance by the ambulance under Dr. Van der Merve attached to the Vryheid Commando. A few burghers who had straggled back to the rear in search of food suddenly found themselves surrounded and captured, among whom was a lawyer of Pretoria named Burger. Others however, eluded their pursuers bringing the intelligence of this unexpected menace, and the indignities suffered by the doctor at the hands of the English colonel, who besides being grossly insulting thrust one of the ambulance horses through the neck with his sabre, and when asked if he had no regard for the Red Cross, blurted out: "D—— the Red Cross!"

Volunteers were hurriedly collected, and, led by young De la Rey of Krugersdorp, who, by his daring called forth the praise of his comrades, a splendid encircling movement was soon in progress. The hussars kept shifting from one elevation to another but finally losing their maxim, became panicky, abandoning their ammunition cart with the prisoners which had been previously tied thereto, and retreated pell-mell to a stone sheep-kraal on

the slope of a hill, exposing themselves to a fire from both the top and the front.

Colonel Trichardt of the Staats Artillerie had ordered a gun rapidly from the front, and placing three well-directed shells in the kraal, soon brought about for the first time in this war the hoisting of the white flag, and surrender of what was to form the nucleus of a very large and rapidly increasing colony of English prisoners at Pretoria.

The ground on which this encounter occurred was almost perfectly level, and notwithstanding De la Rey's followers did not exceed forty, they gave an exhibition of fighting skill worthy of the best traditions of their fathers, and left no doubt of their ability to more than hold their own under any condition which did not place them at too great a disadvantage in regard to numbers. De la Rey was himself wounded twice, yet kept on fighting, and one of his men was killed and two more slightly wounded.

On the twenty-fourth, General Yule, with the retreating column, effected a junction with General White in Ladysmith, having made an extraordinary march. Tramping through mud, night and day, on short rations he accomplished with his exhausted troops the distance of fifty miles in about forty hours, and the world was startled by a cable report of a great British victory.

From the quantities of supplies and ammunition there can be no doubt that this was a disaster the British never anticipated. Ladysmith was the original base, but General White evidently regarded Dundee as safe a depot, and army supplies of every description were stacked in vast blocks covering two acres of ground. Hospitals and bakeries had been built, and further store houses were in course of erection at Hattingspruit, ten miles north of

Glencoe, where engineers had graded seven extra side tracks six hundred yards long, bordered by the sheds under construction. This unfinished work was seen as the Federals advanced from Newcastle, and was one of the sinister threats which precluded all doubt of the intentions of the British government if they had been permitted to complete their plan of operation. The evacuated camp of the British at Dundee was evidence of their altered views and sudden decision to leave. All their tents were standing, or lying on the ground with the guy ropes cut. Pots and kettles with food in various degrees of preparation were still in the kitchens. Cots and blankets were tumbled by their recent occupants, as they had arisen to obey the order of retreat. Uniforms and dress swords still hung to the tent poles, or lay by open and hastily ransacked kits. Baths in the officers' quarters were filled ready for morning use and the thousand and one knick-knacks gathered by soldiers in permanent camp, as mirrors, photographs, and private correspondence of soldiers yet unweaned from the gaiety of their home barrack life and its attendant amours, were scattered in the wreck, everything pointing to the fact that they had considered personal safety foremost without thought of the numerous articles of value or of association which they had abandoned.

The foreign element saw their first opportunity to loot something legitimately belonging to the enemy, and some of their Boer companions, unable to resist the view of wealth and splendor in the officers' quarters, ran him a close second. They would fondle a full-dress uniform in all its glittering burnishments with a delight and reverence almost childlike.

After the novelties of the camp had been exhausted every store or abandoned house was broken open and men

were carrying the most unpractical plunder in form of silver trays, heavy marble clocks, and ornamental chairs or bolts of silk for the home folk, articles impossible to preserve with an army on the march and many of them were discarded by the roadside going to camp, the burgher, either becoming conscious of his greed or weary of carrying the articles on horseback. One burgher more practical than his brethren brought his wagon which he loaded with cooking stoves and bicycles, and headed immediately for home and the Transvaal with his load.

Some few found the canteens all they desired, but this proportion was small and consisted principally of foreigners, intoxication or excess not being a trait in the national character of these farmers. Jewelry stores found the same fate, and as their goods were easily portable, these stores furnished all the loot of any practical value to the looter with the exception of the clean dry change we all succeeded in effecting in our clothes and what we took to eat.

On the arrival of General Joubert, he insisted on the restitution of all the property confiscated and finally getting control of the more lawless spirits, much of the more unpractical stuff was returned. The burghers, satisfied with their smaller articles of value, internal refreshments, and clothing, returned to camp to revel in the abundance of luxuries in food now available. Characteristic of the people, this looting was not indulged in by the majority, and afterward it was used as a reproach that this, or that burgher had some articles taken in this raid, and had failed to return them on command of the commandant-general.

With the spoils which fell to the Republicans was a vast quantity of ammunition running into millions of rounds, including not less than 500,000 of the Dum-

Dum species, known officially as Mark III, and Mark IV. The remainder and greatest amount consisted of the plain nickel-coated bullet, otherwise called Mark II. They were all stamped at Woolwich arsenal, England, with the British government mark, the "Arrowpoint," leaving no doubt from whence they came. Lee-Metford rifles, the weapons necessary to make them effective were also conspicuous by the number stacked or lying scattered about, sufficient to arm at least one regiment.

The use of this ammunition bearing the British government stamp caused a good deal of comment and not a little protest, from its original manufacturers and owners, who entirely ignored the facts of its earlier history. For the first time the burghers were brought face to face with the terrible actual Dum-Dum in battle. They had heard many weird stories of its slaying power, but not until now did they fully comprehend the cruelty inflicted by it. Like ordinary human beings they loudly denounced their enemies, and with the picture vividly before them of torn bodies and shattered limbs, clamored to be supplied with this frightful agent of death. Some bolder than others, particularly relatives of the slain ones, raided the supply over which guards had been mounted, but for the most part they were restrained by the late commandant-general, and beyond a few hundreds of rounds thus looted, none of this ammunition reached the burghers from government sources.

From the very casual reference to the effect of the Dum-Dum on the human body, the reader may form a remote idea of the scene and sufferings which followed Lord Kitchener's march to Khartoum, the worse when it is remembered that this little inhuman agent of death was invented for the special benefit of the Khalifa's

chosen followers, and almost solely used and also that the fanatic dervishes attacked in huge massed bodies, that were mowed down by the thousands.

Of the ammunition used in the Mauser, (Federal) rifle, but not of the regular kind for war purposes, was the sporting "soft-nose," nickel-base, lead-tipped bullet. Some of these had been sold to the burghers for shooting game before the war, by the government who retained in their own hands the sole monopoly for firearms et cetera. Now and then one of these cartridges, would come to light at the front, but the use of them was discountenanced and the number floating around must have been very limited.

Among the captured matter at Dundee were the British war-office surveys of the Republics, with notes of the most accessible method of reaching Pretoria with troops. This report was made in '95, the year prior to the Jameson raid. The Free-State route which was finally taken by Lord Roberts was favored, with garrisons to be left in Northern Natal, and fortifications at Laings Nek. This document plainly indicated the aggressive policy of the British government at that early date.

Telegraph despatches from the war office in London were also found, authorizing the use of Basuto natives as armed scouts who were to receive a dollar and a quarter a day. This is the first official record of the use of natives against the burghers, although unblushingly admitted at a later date.

Among the other papers disclosed was one (labeled "secret report") by Sir J. C. Ardagh, June 1899. It was a compilation of the resources of the Republics of that day. The itemized list of artillery was fairly correct, the small arms and ammunition was underestimated. It gave

the "utmost available force at the disposal of the Republics at 33,500 including rebels from the Cape Colony and mercenaries."

It is probable that the Federals in December, 1899, had 40,000 men either carrying arms on the different borders, or employed in commissary, transport, railroad service, telegraph, hospitals, or in guarding railroads and prisoners.

It is true that many men of over sixty years of age and boys under sixteen were doing the less fatiguing duties of guards, to enable the more capable to see to the fighting lines, thereby increasing the numbers, but many old patriots between the ages of sixty and seventy, veterans of former wars, scorned to be relegated to the past and they could be found in the van of the conflict, surrounded by sons and grandsons, encouraging with their example the more timorous.

The report accounts for the use of this force of 33,500 by 5,000 to garrison Johannesburg, and "overawe the Uitlanders," and "6,200 to garrison Pretoria and surrounding country."

The Transvaal government released these forces by sending most of the British and recalcitrant foreigners over the border before or immediately after the commencement of hostilities. The few British subjects permitted to remain by petition in the interests of banks, mines and commercial firms were easily handled by a special body of police organized to protect property among the neutral foreign element, who for personal reasons had decided to remain in the cities during the war. It is not part of the British character to be aggressive when in the minority, or subject to reprisals, but if any of the few remaining became obstreperous or indiscreet accord-

ing to their temperament, they were put over the border by order of the officials in charge of the government of the town in which they resided.

This report further states that the Boers were mostly armed with Martini-Henri rifles, using smoke (black) powder, and that the attempt to popularize the Mauser had failed, the burgher having discarded it on account of the small calibre, and the barrels bursting on discharge of the cartridge.

It also said that there were but 27,000 Mausers in the arsenal, giving the impression that this constituted the entire small-arm armament, when it was not the case, every burgher being fully armed at all times of peace and war.

It was alleged that the Federal artillery was inferior to the British in "personnel and material," an illusion dispelled in less than a week from the commencement of hostilities.

The 155 Millimetre (six inch) Creusots were reported as old-fashioned and unsuitable for traveling over roads, and in his deductions Sir J. Ardagh writes "It appears certain that after a serious defeat they will be too deficient in discipline and organization to make any further real stand. The *London National Review* of April, 1900, points out the errors of this report already demonstrated to all who investigated, and by this time all the civilized world knows of the Boers' power to remobilize a defeated and partially demoralized force.

Napoleon the first is reported to have said that a third mobilization of a defeated army was impossible. He probably knew Europe but his observation did not embrace or contemplate these hardy, intrepid farmers of South Africa.

The British statisticians had estimated the entire cost of the war at $45,000,000, which at this period needs no comment.

Chapter III

Elandslaagte—Liquor and war—Destruction of railroad—Washbank—Long Tom—Review of forces—Foreigners—Trials of the government—Contrabands of war—Republican artillery—British Natal force—Cronje at Mafeking—Col. Plumer—Kimberly besieged—Mobility of heavy artillery—Mounting and moving guns—Traction engines.

WHILE these events were transpiring at Dundee, General Kock had outdistanced his transport to Elandslaagte with a mixed force of 750 burghers, and foreign volunteers. The character of the country had changed from continuous short, sharp ravines divided by broken ranges of rugged hills, into the more open country surrounding the valleys through which the Klip river and Tugela wend their tortuous courses. Large fertile flats were interspersed between the divides and the offensive and defensive positions for a small force were fewer, but proportionately accessible for attack by greater numbers.

This command at Elandslaagte was in possession of the railroad and the range of low broken hills to the east of the depot. It was imperative for General White to reestablish railroad communications with Dundee. On October 21, General French commanding the cavalry, made a sortie from Ladysmith towards the camp, but when he ascertained the Boers were in possession of the ridges overlooking the depot, he declined to give battle without being reinforced. The infantry were despatched from Ladysmith by rail for his support, and were disembarked under cover of a railway cutting close to the depot, which the Boers had now abandoned for the higher ground.

LATE GENERAL KOCK, AND STAFF

The British force, by this addition approximated 6,000 men, and their artillery became engaged with the Boer Krupp gun at 4,000 yards, but the advent of reinforcements having delayed the attack until three o'clock, there was but a limited time of daylight, and to effect his object, French was therefore compelled to force the fighting. The Scotch regiment of Gordon Highlanders making the charge, lost heavily, but succeeding in the face of the fire both of small arms and Vicker's maxims in forcing the position about dark, when the Lancers were enabled to charge the camp, and earn their boasted synonym of "pig-stickers," by killing the wounded; a significant fact being that none of the Boer dead recovered by their countrymen, who had died from sabre or lance wounds, but were also wounded with rifles. As there was no British rifle fire during the cavalry charge, they must have been shot before being despatched by the Lancers.

Many harrowing tales could be affixed, made under affidavit of eye-witnesses, who lay still until able to save themselves by crawling away in the darkness. But as the British have boasted of this exploit through their own papers and received the approbation of their countrymen, affidavits would seem commonplace and useless.

General Kock, the Republican commander was mortally wounded, and Dr. Coster, one of the most brilliant and promising naturalized sons of the Republic, also lost his life. French captured two maxim Vickers-Nordenfeldts, or Pom-poms, a fifteen pound Krupp, with 183 prisoners, mostly foreigners, among these being Colonel Shiel, commander of the German corps. Were it not irrelevant many facts might also be written of the ill-treatment of prisoners after surrender, by the soldiery and populace while *en route* to the coast.

The major portion of the Boers when they saw defeat was certain, got safely away under their leader Commandant Ben Viljoen. It was lack of this foresight then and for the whole period of the war which caused so heavy a mortality among the foreign volunteers. The burghers recognize quickly an overpowering weight against them, and when overwhelmed, to avoid death or capture, wisely leave, and it is this gift that has made them such a formidable antagonist to conquer. The foreigner with visions of chivalry and past national glory remains, and as a defeated minority loses his life or liberty and power of future offensiveness.

Commandant Viljoen, wounded in the foot and alone in a strange country, became lost during the night. Finding a farmhouse, he called to inquire the way, then the occupants, three Johannesburg Englishmen at once recognized the commander, and in their desire to make the capture, foolishly attempted to pull him from his horse, resulting in the death of one and the wounding of another. Riding further he fortunately encountered a Kaffir kraal where the Zulu occupants directed him back to the main column marching from Dundee. The scattered and escaping members of his command filed in by small parties the entire day, until the fact was manifested that the Boers had suffered but slight loss in comparison to their foreign comrades.

General French, probably on account of the news from Dundee and the threatened condition of Ladysmith from the west by the Orange Free State under Commandant Prinsloo, retired on Ladysmith with a loss of 254 killed and wounded besides leaving many of his dead on the field. Although the object of his sortie to reestablish communications with Glencoe was abortive, it did not prevent another glowing account of a British success

against overwhelming odds, being cabled to England for home consumption. The Republicans immediately re-occupied the field and gathering their fallen dead they gave them a soldier's funeral.

Unfortunately on the provision train, captured at Elandslaagte by the Republicans, there had been a car of barreled beer, whisky and canteen rum. The foreign element on the eve of the battle had indulged a little too freely in the use of these luxuries, and although the constant rain and soaked condition of the imbibers was excuse enough for the excess, it was inclined to warp their judgment of the time when they had had sufficient and was a circumstance to be regretted by themselves and deeply deplored by their adopted countrymen.

At the arrival of the Republicans at Dundee they had repaired the railroad in the rear, but were still destroying it in advance to the south. The generals could not believe but this hurried retreat of British was a trap, and in the entire advance to Ladysmith they wrecked the railroad after it came into their possession. They could not grasp their success, always expecting to be forced back to Laings Nek, and they continued to destroy the bridges, knowing that they would lose their convoy of wagons in the anticipated flight if the British possessed the railroad. By these timid tactics they lost days in the ultimate investment of Ladysmith, but the idea was so firmly rooted; that the meanest burgher would impress on you the idea, that the occupation of Natal was only temporary. Now the railroad had to be repaired north of Dundee to remove the vast quantities of captured stores at that place, to Pretoria, but no effort was, however attempted to rebuild the railroad between Glencoe and Ladysmith, until the complete and effectual investment of that town was insured, the army being put to

great inconvenience and delays by the enforced use of bullock teams.

Again on the twenty-fourth, General White made a further demonstration in force to check the Republicans advancing from the north, and to enable General Yule with the Dundee garrison to effect their escape. He advanced towards Elandslaagte but encountered the van of the Boer army at Washbank where a thousand men checked his further progress holding him at bay for half a day. Yule, minus his provision wagons which the safety of his army led him to abandon, arrived in Ladysmith. White then considered his object achieved and with a loss of a hundred killed and wounded retired on his base leaving to the Boers, who had suffered sixteen casualties for the day, the possession of the field.

The Republicans now began to spread through and overrun the country and a command had overpowered the small British garrison at Pomeroy and forced General White's right wing to also take refuge in Ladysmith. The entire English army in northern Natal was thus concentrated in the town without an outpost. The next five days were occupied by the Federals converging to Ladysmith, their objective point, and on the twenty-ninth they formed an arc of 180 degrees to the north of the town, having fortified positions within artillery range of the British camp.

The six inch Creusot brought forward from Laings Nek arrived that night, overcoming tremendous difficulties caused by the destruction of the railroad and the enforced transportation by wagon. The heavy gun attached to forty span of oxen would sink in the mire to the axle. The gun was unrecognizable from its coating of mud and the wheels were solid discs of clay but accompanied by 200 men, aiding the bullocks with hand

ropes, it safely reached the camp in time to be cleaned and mounted on Pepworth Hill ready for the engagement that followed the next day.

It would be as well to review the comparative strength of the opposing forces at this time. The Republics from figures of the veldkornets of the twenty-five districts in the Transvaal had registered 25,410 male adults between the ages of sixteen and fifty. The Orange Free State with nineteen districts registered 14,834 under the same conditions, or a combined registered total of 40,244. This was supposed to represent the number of men liable for service in local wars with natives, or other enemies of their country, but it hardly gave an estimate of the forces engaged in this war, on account of the numbers of burghers over and under the age limit, supplemented by the lame, the halt and the blind, who did duty in the field or relieved others from the thousand and one duties which the presence of war had entailed on the government.

The prisoners and railroads were entirely guarded by men whose age and infirmities made campaigning impossible, or boys so young they were shorter than their weapons, with the aid lent by foreigners who were willing to do this duty for their support until a more prosperous era arrived.

The 40,000 was fully 5,000 short of the number that rendered service to the two states in a more or less degree. In consequence of a faulty system of registration in the field and the absence of discipline it was difficult to form a correct estimate of the forces serving at one time with the army and the numbers quietly resting on their farms. Many wild guesses have been made but the greatest ever on the fighting line was probably in

January, 1900, when the repeated efforts of the British to break the cordon was taxing every resource of the Republics to maintain their defensive, and the government by putting forth strenuous efforts must have succeeded in placing 36,000 to 38,000 men bearing arms on their vast boundaries, this force being composed of the burghers of the states, colonial Afrikanders and foreigners who had espoused the cause.

Howard Hillegas, special war-correspondent of the *New York World,* in his book "Boers in War" says that from the best information at hand in Pretoria with the aid of the government, and the correspondents, John Knight of the *San Francisco Call,* Thomas Millard of the *New York Herald,* and Douglas Story of the *London Daily Mail,* the Boers had at no time over 30,000 men fighting, but we are inclined to think this a little below the estimate.

The best figures on the foreigners serving with the Republicans are bound to be only approximate, but these would be very close.

Americans	300
Irish	500
Germans	750
French	150
Russian	60
Scandinavian	175
Hollanders	600
Italians and Greeks	200
Cape Colony and Natal Afrikanders	6,000

These were chiefly under commanders of their own nationality, they were before the war, residents of the country and had enlisted in the army without pay, to prove their appreciation and endorsement of the country

A German Commando

which had furnished them a profitable living in peace for the years that they had resided under the governments of the Republics. They have been called mercenaries by the British, but there was no time of the war but that remunerative positions were available to them on the mines worked by the government, which offers they repeatedly declined, preferring to take the chances of war in vindication of their principles.

At the time of the utmost mobilization the railroad service was complete and every department of a government compelled to rely on its own resources was in perfect harmonious working order. They successfully operated the coal mines and lead mines in the Transvaal with the non-combatant miners remaining in the Republics and even found labor to restart some of the gold-mines on the Witwatersrand in their own interest. In this manner 220,000 ounces were extracted making it possible to pay in gold for all shipment of merchandise brought through Lorenzo Marques consisting principally of sugar, coffee and flour for which they paid exorbitant prices, fearing through the known influence of the British at Lisbon to lose even this, their one port for articles not under the head of contrabands of war.

Both of the South African Republics ordered further artillery when the war seemed inevitable, but by England mobilizing their reserves and taking a threatening position on their frontiers, it was impossible to await its arrival and the issue was forced before the guns were delivered. Necessarily the Republics did without them, those already shipped returning on the vessels of the country from which they were bought. This did not prevent many fables of the shipment of cannon and ammunition through the Portuguese territory during the war, but they can safely be set aside. The utmost con-

traband was probably a case of shoes, which would get through after being many times bought from each Portuguese who was fortunate enough to have it pass through his hands, or possibly a few volunteers with their personal arms who bribed these same officials and appeared in Pretoria in all the glory of a self-designed uniform that would grace a secret order, but of suicidal tendencies in modern war.

Of artillery the Transvaal possessed on October 11:

4 Creusots, 155 millimetre.
4 Krupp Howitzers, 12 centimetre (mobile siege guns).
1 Muzzle loading mortar, 15 centimetre.
4 Krupp (quick fire), 37 millimetre.
4 Creusot (quick fire), 75 millimetre.
1 Muzzle loading, 15 centimetre (in Johannesburg Fort).

And of maxims they had:

14 Maxim Vickers (Nordenfeldts), 37 millimetre.
12 Maxim Lee-Metfords machine guns (for horse transport).
10 Maxim Martini-Henri (mounted on carriages).

The Orange Free State possessed:

14 Krupp, 75 millimetre, old-fashioned and using common black (smoked) powder.
6 Six-pound Armstrongs (discarded early in the war as unserviceable).
3 Three-pound Armstrongs (discarded early in the war as unserviceable).
1 Krupp (quick fire), 37 millimetre.
3 Maxims (Martini-Henri).

The Transvaal also possessed seven modern guns for which they had no ammunition and these were destroyed on that account when the government decided to evacuate the capital. These consisted of:

1 Krupp, 8 centimetre.
1 Nordenfeldt, 75 millimetre.
1 Creusot (quick fire), 75 millimetre.
4 Krupp mortars.

The invasion of Natal found Sir George White at the head of 7,750 men and sixty-nine field guns, the rank and file being made up of 4,750 regulars and 3,000 South African volunteers and irregulars. This latter force comprised two distinct corps. One the Natal Carbineers, a drilled body of local militiamen, and the other the Imperial Light Horse, formed by men lately employed on the Johannesburg mines and member of the South African League, a revolutionary secret society who had shown their zeal for Jingoism by organizing before the war was an assured fact. The East India contingent of volunteers were the first foreign irregulars to arrive, joining Sir George White on the eve of his investment.

To briefly follow the events which occurred on the other borders; General Cronje, with the Republican army on the western frontier, had succeeded on October 13, in wrecking and capturing an armored train at Kraaipan, thirty-eight miles south of Mafeking, which cut the railroad communication on the south and gave him sixteen prisoners including Lieutenant Nesbit and his son. On the same day the railroad was destroyed by General Snyman at Jagersfontein, twenty miles north of the threatened town, and an unfortunate incident for the Republicans occurred at Gaberonies. A car of some

explosive, probably considered dangerous to preserve in a town liable to bombardment, was abandoned at this station after being fixed to explode on the forcing of the doors. It was firmly sealed to give the impression that it contained something of value, and when discovered by a passing commando, they considered they had made a capture. All crowded around it eager to participate in the spoils whatever they might be. The plot was successful, and while attempting to open the car, the mine exploded, killing a large percentage of the surrounding burghers. This accident, occurring in the early part of the war, so shocked the government that they did not publish the fact, fearing the effect on the morale of the recently mobilized forces, the proportion of whom knew nothing about high explosives, and were therefore prone to exaggerate their power and method of application. But, to our knowledge, this formed the first and last suppression of casualties that were suffered in the course of the war.

On the fourteenth of October Mafeking was completely invested by the Federals with a garrison of three hundred of the Protectorate regiment, a force raised just previous to the war by their commander, Colonel Baden-Powell, who also had with him some Bechuanaland Police, and many volunteer civilians, his available artillery consisting of sixteen field pieces supplemented by machine guns.

The entire country around Mafeking was an undulating plain covered by patches of shrub bushes and extending east as far as Johannesburg, broken only by rises or mesas, sufficient to hide small camps from view on one side, but forming no protection from elevated shell fire. It was this feature of the country that caused the Mafeking-Johannesburg route to be selected by the British in the Jameson fiasco of '96, the Republicans

being popularly understood to be prejudiced against fighting in the open with a superior force. And it was the same feature that led the Republicans to despatch their best known and most aggressive general, Piet Cronje to destroy the Kimberley-Bulawayo Railroad, strike a decisive blow at the British troops congregated on the western border, and paralyze any future expedition that might attempt, by a flying column, to possess themselves of Johannesburg, or Pretoria, when the main Boer forces were on the more distant frontiers to the south.

The effective siege of Mafeking and possession of the railroad gave the necessary assurance, and Colonel Plumer with his force of about 500 volunteers belonging to the Rhodesian Horse, (also raised locally by Colonel Baden-Powell), and the district mounted Police was isolated in the Tuli district to the north, and beyond slightly harassing tactics and the massacre of the white inhabitants of Deerdepoort he no longer figured in this war.

On the fifteenth of October, General De la Rey, in command of 1,600 Transvaalers, and General Wessels at the head of 1,400 Free Staters, had surrounded the town of Kimberley southwest of the Free State. The defending garrisons commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich, was composed of 700 infantry (of the First North Lancashire Regiment), 2,000 local volunteers, and twenty field guns. The volunteers were workmen of English origin, who had lost their employment by the cessation of the diamond-mining. The inducement of $1.25 a day and the prospect of a short term of service had appeared to them a good method of utilizing their unemployed time. Immediately upon these sieges being complete, the Pretoria government sent the four six inch Creusot siege

guns to the investing forces, which demonstrated to the British the possibility of handling heavy guns on bad roads.

These guns, nick-named "Long Toms," played an important part in the sieges, Kimberley and Mafeking each receiving the attentions of one, and two were sent to Ladysmith. Their gross weight was 12,000 pounds but the Republicans overcame all difficulties and placed them in any position desired in contradiction to the British secret report on their mobility, but it was a costly and temporary advantage. The enemy quickly imitated the manœuvre and with more resources to draw upon, succeeded in getting five naval guns into Ladysmith twelve hours after the Boer guns arrived. The point in which the British never equaled the Boers was the power to move these heavy guns quickly. In all the hurried retreats almost routs, they could not succeed in capturing, until late in the following year, one of these ponderous pieces of ordnance, and then only when the adoption of flying columns, and the lack of ammunition had rendered them superfluous as an offensive weapon.

After March, 1900 the preponderance of the British heavy guns had commenced to nullify their utility and the Boer had introduced an element into the war more formidable and demoralizing to himself than legions of soldiers. The constant fire of siege guns he had to endure at every attempted defense, and with his own gun laboring in the rear of the retreat, he commenced to regard it as a burden which gave him many sleepless treks, but, for its protection, it enforced many brilliant rear-guard actions which would have otherwise been unfought, and brought forth tactics most harassing to the pursuing forces. This cause developed the system of

"Long Tom" Passing Through Klip River

rear-guard tactics, since so ably perfected and practised by De Wet.

The lessons brought forward in this war, in regard to the movement of heavy guns with field forces are instructive and worthy of mention. The Boers at all times used oxen with their six inch Creusot, the gun being transshipped to false bearing while traveling, which equalized the weight on the carriage and minimized the load. The first attempt to reach Ladysmith was made with twenty-six large American mules, but these were immediately abandoned as unpractical and oxen substituted permanently, and thereafter twenty-two span of oxen were used or held available as part of the gun's equipment. An ox is capable of hauling twice the load of a mule, draws steadily and is more reliable in a hard pull, seldom allowing himself to get so stalled that he won't attempt the effort again. He lives well without forage and will make eighteen or twenty miles a day upon ordinary grass. He is easily herded and quickly yoked, and can be induced to trot for several miles with a load if such a course becomes necessary. The ammunition was moved in an open buck wagon, which also carried the tripod for slinging the gun into its firing bearings on the carriage. Bullocks were also used for this, in proportion to the load, the gun and ammunition-wagon keeping together to enable the doubling of the teams in fords and washouts. In positions where it was difficult to mount the gun, hand-power would be used to aid or replace the oxen,—as many as three hundred men pulling on man ropes, would successfully drag it over any obstacle impossible to remove, nothing being considered, provided the gun might be effectual in the position desired.

The guns worked better on a platform, which lessened the labor of bringing them forward after the recoil, and in a permanent siege this was furnished. Later, however, from constant change of the field of operation platforms were discarded for lack of time and material.

After the evacuation of Pretoria, and during the possession by the Republicans of the Lorenzo Marques, Pretoria Railroad, one of these guns was most effectually mounted on an ordinary flat car, stayed and strengthened with iron shields and protected from rifle fire with sandbags. The narrow (42. inch) gauge of the railroad and width of the car, with allowance for the recoil, only gave it a muzzle radius of forty degrees, but the curves on the railroad were so numerous that the artillerymen could take advantage of them in placing their train to give the gun all the radius desired. The British shipped their six inch quick-firing siege gun to Pretoria in a similar manner, but as its weight was estimated at twenty-four thousand pounds, any other mode of transport would have been practically impossible.

Traction engines have been used, and their adoption suggested for transport of heavy ordnance but it is far from proven superior to the older method. The scarcity of water and necessity for coal would be found a great disadvantage in an unsettled district. Their weight and habit of miring on one side, and their present inability to help themselves, would compel them to travel in pairs, also to have hauling drums with wire ropes attached to do service for each other.

By sinking anchors in solid ground they could be pulled from boggy places by their own power, or at deep sluits, by anchoring on the bank, their loads could be drawn up to them, but the hauling drums would have

to have a lead below the axles of the wheels (both fore and aft) to give the necessary purchase on the wheels when it was desirable to use this power for their own locomotion, or to pull directly on anything below them.

In a country the least mountainous, where draught animals and grass are to be obtained, there is little probability of the old method being superseded by steam. A unit in a team is easily replaced or discarded where draught oxen are used, unlike an engine where the injury to a small but vital part may disable the whole power at command. Without duplicate parts it would be impossible to proceed and the delay of the transport generally means the delay of the whole force to which it is attached.

Chapter IV

Battle of Modderspruit—A Boer advance—A "white flag incident"—Accuracy in rifle fire—Sam Leon—Lombard's Kop—Naval guns—Balloons as scouts—Irish Brigade—Col. Blake—Republican uncertainty—Armistice—Joubert's magnanimity—Ladysmith besieged—Umbrellas—Women as government tailors—Reconnaissance south of the Tugela river—Armored train—Weenan—Beacon Hill—Signal corps—Identification cards—Ambulances—Runners (black and white)—Search lights—Horse sickness—General camp life—Health.

TO return to the active hostilities, in Natal, on the twenty-ninth, Sir George White had seen the activity of the Republicans on Little Bulwhana Hill, in their preparation for mounting the expected siege gun, and on the thirtieth he attempted to dislodge and capture this gun. Sending to the north the Gloucester regiment, under Colonel Carleton, as a left flank, they made a night advance, but failing to take up the position desired they were compelled to seek refuge in Nicholson's Nek, and on the opening of fire their artillery mules stampeded with their guns. Quickly surrounded by part of the Orange Free State forces under Commandant Christian De Wet and a detachment of the Johannesburg Police, they surrendered 1,300 men and a mountain battery of five guns, after a three hours' engagement. The country in which this latter was fought consisted of wide, open valleys sloping to numerous creeks, divided by irregular mesas with rocky prominences dotted along the ridges around which the fighting centred. The advances were made across the flats which were thickly covered by mimosa bushes growing eight or nine feet high, forming a screen to the advance or retreat of the forces, and in-

tersected by numerous good roads converging to Ladysmith. There was also a higher and more broken range of hills running east and west on the south boundary of the scene of conflict.

The British right wing rested on the range of hills south and east of Ladysmith, where they had taken strong positions on the previous night, and adopted the defensive. The Vryheid, Bethal, Piet Rietief and Boksberg Commandos, advancing at daylight found them strongly entrenched. Attacking, they drove them from their positions, from which they fled in great disorder, leaving a hand maxim, forty prisoners, and 130 dead and wounded of the King's Royal Rifles.

The Boksberg command, under Veldkornet Derksen, advancing at daylight to find the enemy, rode to the first mesa from camp and surveyed, while exposing themselves, the points on the opposite side of the dry creek. If this move drew no fire, then the 200 burghers in loose formation dashed to the next divide to renew these tactics, until five or six sluits had been passed in safety. The enemy were then discovered in a rocky crest which they had *eschanzed* or entrenched on the opposite rise. From the rattle of musketry it was thought the force was large, and with signals, they turned the artillery to their assistance, but the rifle fire was recklessly high, and the Boers lying sheltered, began to shoot their best. Calmly regulating their sights until satisfied with the distance, they shot as deliberately as if on target practise.

Large bodies of troops out of range could be seen on the flats in the British rear, and the successful termination of this branch of the fight seemed improbable. There were no Federals closer than 1,200 yards on the south, and reinforcements were impossible from the east. As the masses of British troops continued to bank up behind

their defenses, the more timid Boers, dreading a charge in their first battle, took their horses and made for the rear. But about 150 stood firm, showing no alarm, and firing at everything that was a target until the Vryheid commando succeeded in fighting their way into the enemy's south flank. After four hours we had the pleasure of seeing the white flag displayed on the British hill, and the troops fleeing among the bushes to the rear of their positions. The Boers immediately ceased firing and mounting their horses rode toward the contested hill.

Here occurred one of those unfortunate incidents, which, if the positions had been reversed, would have been cabled over the world as an illustration of the barbarity of the Boers. The white flag had been exposed by the ranking commanding officer on the crest of the hill, but was unseen by a British sergeant and two privates who had crawled to a sheep-kraal under the brow of the hill, beneath, and out of the sight of their commanding officer. When, after the surrender the Boers were seen racing across the open ground, these men concluded it was a charge, and pluckily fired into the front rank, killing a white-haired man of sixty, named de Bruyn, and seriously wounding another. They were quickly surrounded and made prisoners, and the brave sergeant was overcome with grief when he discovered his mistake, weeping at the sight of the old man dying at his feet. If this non-commissioned officer had been a Boer, we have no hesitation in saying that he would have been bayoneted in spite of excuses, but these big-hearted men recognizing justice in the case, sympathized with his grief by kindly words and gestures, and to encourage him praised his pluck and resource.

Another unfortunate incident of a similar nature, but

reflecting to the credit of the soldier and costing him his life, was one which occurred at the slope of Lombard's Kop, at the point attacked by the Vryheid commando. Failing to notice the surrender of his comrades, a lance corporal of the King's Royal Rifles, continued firing fully twenty-five minutes after the white flag had been hoisted, and the retreating regiment was far in the rear. In efforts to indicate to him the condition of affairs, a clergyman and two burghers were wounded when that procedure was abandoned, and instead, a few men worked round and shot him. At the side of this corporal, eighty-eight empty cartridges were found lying, and his recent enemies became his friends—extolling his bravery they reverently buried him where he died.

When we reached the top of the hill, we saw the carnage caused by the accurate rifle fire, and the flats toward Ladysmith were densely covered with fleeing troops, who were allowed to escape unmolested. The enemy's firing positions were well built, but had not proved sufficient. Illustrating the efficiency of the Boer fire at 800 yards, it may be mentioned that the commanding officer of the British, lying prone behind a *schanze,* on exposing the calf of his leg was immediately hit in that member, then in an effort to encourage his men to move forward, he beckoned with his arm, only to be again wounded in the exposed limb. Afterward, lying watching the Boers he had received his final wound through the head, his second in command lay by his side in the same *schanze* with a similar wound. Nearly all the dead soldiers were shot through the head as they exposed it to shoot, and, apparently by order, all the rifles we saw, were noticed to have been sighted at 1,400 yards for an 800 yard range. This retreating wing never halted until it arrived in Ladysmith, the Republicans following

them into all the positions they evacuated. The British centre seemed hesitating and in doubt which side to reinforce, and failed to do either, but retreated without once becoming effectually aggressive.

The Boer siege gun, mounted in the night, was worked by Sam Leon, a French engineer and representative of Schneider's gun works, under fire of the six naval guns that had arrived from Durban that morning.

Lombard Kop was a table-land mountain rising 400 feet above the range of the hills to the south, and had been provisioned and placed in a state of defense by the British. What their object could have been is hard to guess, as the hill, almost inaccessible, has no strategical value, and is without any natural supply of water, which had to be carried up in kegs with great labor. Its fortification must remain one of the military problems without a solution. The enemy left the hill and the supplies upon the defeat of their companions in the lower range, and no one would have known the brilliant genius which had prompted its original occupation, if a Boer, in the idle weeks that followed, had not taken a noble desire to climb on a hill where he could roll off rocks and halloo as they crashed through the undergrowth, and singled Lombard's Kop as filling the requirements. He labored to the summit where he discovered provisions, ammunition and kegs of water, sufficient for a protracted defense, provided anyone had meditated an assault. The hill thereafter became an excursion ground to the burghers who carried much of the supplies away to camp, but it left a lingering impression on their minds that the hill was a place better suited for avoiding a fight, than for the opposite purpose, and these somewhat indolent people all concurred in the conclusion that any one climbing that hill deserved to be beyond the danger of bullets.

There were now two 4.7 guns, and four 12-pounders in Ladysmith under command of Captain Lambert, and worked by the sailors that accompanied the guns from H.M.S. the "Terrible." The fire of these guns and three batteries of field artillery, under Isimbulwhana Hill was directed by signal from the British balloon which now became a feature in the operations of this war.

The balloon besides directing their artillery fire was able to scout the movements of the Republicans. The burghers much disliked and feared the introduction of this modern accessory of war. Although not very effectual on this day, its utility has been many times demonstrated since, greatly to the disadvantage of the Boers. There is an uncanny feeling in the fact of a sheltered camp or picket searching the heavens for their enemies, but this was often the case. A commando retreating or advancing, ordinarily under complete cover, would see this ill-omened spheroid rising over the British lines. They had hardly time to assume a loose formation and separate the wagons, when the British heavy guns like strong, cruel, blind monsters, controlled by the evil princes of our fairy tale days, would commence to "*feel*" for their destruction, the balloon directing their efforts to crush an unseen foe. This fire would be continued until the threatened force passed from range of the guns, or obtained cover from the view of the scout in the balloon, when peace was again possible, the gunners ceasing to fire at they knew not what.

The British had concentrated their artillery fire upon the Republican siege gun, which was gallantly served. The ammunition had to be carried up the hill by hand, and the Irish Brigade under Colonel Blake, volunteered for this service. Colonel Blake, a graduate from the American army, had his arm shattered, and two of his

men were killed, but they were succesful in keeping the gun in action, and gained the praise of the Commandant-General for their bravery. Lukas Meyer was taken seriously ill and carried from the field, the command of his division devolving upon Louis Botha, who carried his branch of the engagement to a successful conclusion.

This is called by the British the battle of Farquhar's farm, the name of the farm on which the centre column did most of its manœuvring. The Republicans call it the battle of Modderspruit. The victory gave them Ladysmith, but General Joubert and his advisers were too uncertain of themselves to take advantage of the enemy's rout. This constant and recurring success over a superior and better equipped force than their own, and the continual retreat of that force, only increased their suspicions of a trap, which feeling was undoubtedly shared by most of the burghers.

In the afternoon many of the more daring and aggressive Republicans rode around the town, and up the afterward dearly contested Cæsar Hill, without encountering even a picket. There was nothing between them and possession, if not of the town itself, at least of the commanding hills, but Joubert in his inane fear of disaster recalled them that night. These few, who saw their advantage and were willing and anxious to retain the position, were therefore forced to reluctantly return to the laagers, and Ladysmith with its strategical advantages, vast stores and garrison was not only lost to the Republic but became a millstone to hamper the freedom of the entire Federal force in Natal.

Joubert, shocked at the loss of life to the enemy, went to the other extreme and generously granted the British forty-eight hours' armistice to bury their dead, which period enabled them to complete the armament of the

BURGHERS AND A CAPTURED GUN

naval guns, to mine all approaches to the town and to strongly fortify Cæsar Hill, his mistaken leniency costing the Republics many valuable lives, endangered their ultimate independence and made the prolonged investment of the town a necessity. General French, who afterward became the most brilliant and efficient cavalry leader under Lord Roberts, left by the last train and was allowed to depart in peace with the Federals in possession of the railroad. The communication south of Ladysmith was then destroyed and the cordon was drawn closer by the Republican army of 13,000 men, now distributed over thirty miles of lines. Sir George White, commanding 13,500 regular troops, and 7,500 volunteer civilians, six naval guns and seventy-two field guns, was reduced to act on the defensive, to a smaller force.

On November the third, Colonel Murray of the British garrison, broke through the thin circle, and with two batteries and 400 cavalry, succeeded in joining Colonel Hilyard at Colenso on the Tugela, but on the Republicans threatening Fort Wylie on the northern bank of the river, the town and fort were hastily abandoned, Colonel Hilyard retreating to Estcourt to await reinforcements.

Leaving outposts on the Tugela the Federals returned to Ladysmith, and now realizing their mistake, on November 9, the generals attempted to capture the town by assault. An attack was made from all sides, but the country was exposed and the manœuvre, half-hearted, brought forth no advantage but a moral effect on the garrison who reported 110 casualties.

The weather was still most wretched, but there were occasional bursts of sunshine and the peculiar feature was revealed that a large per cent of the Boers had umbrellas of variegated colors which they used as sunshades, and one might see an entire commando riding by twos and

threes with their full war equipment carrying these useful articles, satisfied of their utility and unconscious of their humorous aspect.

The women of the Transvaal towns, anxious to help the cause, had offered their services to the government, to be used in making garments for the men in the field, and many misshapen articles commenced to arrive, which, on account of their cleanliness would be gleefully donned, forming combinations almost as incongruous as the umbrellas and warriors. The commissariat was improving slowly, and it was now possible to get food at irregular intervals. The days were passed in hunting, and Haartebeeste and Rayboks broke the monotony of diet, with chicken, geese, pigs and other domestic stock.

On November 12, the garrison of Ladysmith, remaining more or less passive, Joubert determined to make a reconnaissance with a small force south of the Tugela, against Pietermaritzburg and attempt to destroy the communications between that town and Durban. Accompanied by Assistant-General Louis Botha with 1,600 men, on the fifteenth of November, they succeeded at Frere in removing a rail behind an armored train that was reconnoitering north from Estcourt. Awaiting its return in ambush, they disabled a car with the first shell and destroyed the train without serious casualties to themselves, capturing seventy-two prisoners, amongst whom was Mr. Winston Churchill, one of these armed correspondents who pleaded that his right to defend himself did not justify the aggressive force in making him a prisoner, but the Boer commander refused to be coerced and he was sent with his companions to Pretoria, where he qualified to lecture on the war.

The burghers passed through Weenan (weeping), where in 1838, Dingaan, the Zulu chief, had massacred

282 old men, women and children, with their 252 native servants. These formed the camp of sixty-six able-bodied men, under command of Piet Retief who had been, a few days previously surrounded and killed by the same Kaffir chief at the instigation of the British, the whole force being the original settlement of Boers who had bought the territory they occupied from this savage, at the time they were forced by persecution to flee from their homes in the Cape Colony.

At the monument in commemoration of this event, the small army in 1899, under Joubert, had now an opportunity to renew their memory with the price of blood this country had cost their race, to be again lost, for the British in 1842 finding it fruitful and capable of annexation drove the original settlers further north beyond the Drakensburg range into the Transvaal and Free State.

From Weenan the small Republican command continued its further progress south. With little opposition they passed through Greytown where they secured horses, then to Highlands, a station between Estcourt and the Blood river, where they destroyed the railroad and telegraph wires. This cut off the base and all direct communications of the garrison of 4,000 men under Colonel Hilyard at Estcourt, leaving him no resort but the heliograph to make his critical situation known in Pietermaritzburg. This condition caused an unnecessary alarm to the inhabitants of Durban, who issued a call to arms to the citizens under the absurd assumption that Joubert's small force of 1,600 men, were threatening this strongly garrisoned town.

An outpost of Boers took up a position on Beacon Hill overlooking Estcourt on November 22, but were dislodged by the British, who upon the Republicans' reinforcing were in turn forced to evacuate and retreat into town.

This fight took place in the night and during a fearful rain storm accompanied by vivid lightning which killed a Boer artilleryman and several British soldiers, upon the extreme crest of the mountain. In the keenness of the encounter the lightning was the only means of distinguishing friend from foe, each flash being followed by the report of the rifles, and positions were noted, to be possessed in the intervals of inky darkness. The British called this the battle of Willow Grange and they left eleven killed and sixty-seven wounded in the hands of the Boers. General Joubert, while encouraging his burghers in the first alarm, was injured by the falling of his horse, causing the internal complaint from which he ultimately died.

British troops were now rapidly reaching Pietermaritzburg from Durban, of which the Federals were well-informed. In consequence of General Barton massing his men at Weston on the south side of the Mooi river, the news of the engagements of Graspan and Belmont in the Orange Free State not being altogether favorable, and President Kruger desiring the subjection of Ladysmith, General Joubert decided to retreat to the Tugela and take that river as a line of defense until Ladysmith could be reduced and the force used in this siege released.

The retreat to Colenso was safely effected without loss and this expedition will always remain the one brilliant and redeeming feat of Joubert in this war. He had cut himself off from his base and for twenty days overrun a large territory, denuding the country of stock and threatening with siege a garrison nearly three times the number of his own troops, defeating them in every skirmish and effectually in the only engagement, only relinquishing his sway when his retreat was most hazardous, and threatened by the large force from the south, who were attempting to

BOER SIGNAL CORPS

relieve Colonel Hilyard. It is also illustrative of the demoralization of the organized British troops, by the defeats in northern Natal, without which feature it would have been impossible for the Federals to harass and defy with impunity a force so much their superior in men and guns.

The scouting had been done by volunteers from the different commandos and had been most complete, although the service was greatly assisted by friendly farmers who fed and cared for the scouts in a manner which made daily reports without information to impart, unnecessary.

The Boer heliograph service, invaluable on this and similar excursions, was proved quite sufficient for the need of the entire army. The corps had been formed in 1890 and gradually increased, until in the fall of 1899 it numbered seventy operators under command of Lieutenant Paff. They used a fourteen inch and a seven inch glass, having ranges of ninety and fifty miles. One operator and instrument being assigned to each general, flying column or scouting expedition of sufficient importance.

By reason of the number of unidentified foreigners and Boers killed at Elandslaagte, there was an attempt made to issue identification cards under the auspices of the Red Cross society. This never became popular. Burghers accepted the cards but seldom kept them. The Cape-Colonials were permitted to have two addresses, one their true address in the Cape Colony, was recorded in Pretoria and a fictitious address was placed on the card they carried, to mislead the British in the event of their becoming prisoners. The record of the true addresses came into possession of the British at the fall of that capital and furnished them with evidence that has since caused the death by hanging or confiscation of property of many of the unfortunate owners.

In connection with the Red Cross many ambulances were fitted out under the management of the Republican governments, or as a direct gift from local and European sympathizers with the Boer cause. So many were there that they were out of proportion to the needs of the country, and this branch of the service became an abuse. Ambulance corps of doctors and assistants could be found hidden away in some ideal sylvan camping ground only to come forth when their well-supplied commissariat needed replenishing, or the stock of medicinal brandy had become exhausted. Furnished with the best of everything both in transport and in edibles, it was difficult to find doctors when their services became a real need; but few were zealous enough to seek the location of an expected fight, and as there were none to give them orders, it occurred frequently that only one or two over-worked ambulances would attend a battle which had probably already been in progress a few days. As an illustration, one of our messmates was wounded by a shrapnel bullet in the shoulder, the fourth day of Spion's Kop fight, and we were forced to make him ride five hours in the rear of the position before we could find an ambulance or doctor to set his arm or dress the wound.

The government had impressed or otherwise *commandeered* the most easily riding vehicles to be found in Johannesburg for this service. The body of the wagon remained unchanged, and by simply hoisting a white flag with a red cross they were recognized as ambulances. The light delivery wagons of the merchants were found the most suitable, and these were sought eagerly for the service. There was a touch of grim humor in the sight of one of these conveyances flying the emblem of mercy, with "Alson's Meat Delivery," or "Balson, The Butcher," painted in bright glaring letters beneath the Red Cross

flag, but the Johannesburg Police went one better than this by *commandeering* for the ambulance of their command a long wagonette which carried on its side, in gilt letters the sign "Thornton's Picnic Van." We imagine a wounded man carried from the field in one of these conveyances might forget his injury if not too serious, in the consciousness of the satire.

The British garrison in Ladysmith and the relieving force south of the Tugela river, had each a long distance heliograph station, whereby they could exchange views and they also had perfect communication by means of the search light using their own codes. The Boer searchlight could harass and interrupt the correct reading by flashing on the same clouds and obliterating the punctuation, but it was only a temporary annoyance, and with patience they would succeed in holding their conversation. They could also ascend in the balloon to a sufficient elevation to read heliograph messages from the separated camps, but the jerk of the balloon from its anchors made an answer most difficult and only possible under most favorable circumstances.

Messengers, both white and black, the negro preferred, were constantly going between their besieged garrisons and the columns attempting their relief. By reason of the number of personal servants the Boers used it was next to impossible to identify a strange negro. The burghers did not use at this time a continuous line of pickets and seldom doubled outposts. All that was necessary to get into their camp was to leave the beaten path and climb over the hills in the least accessible manner, thereby passing the guards on the foot trails. Once inside you could talk, dress or act in any manner or language you desired with an extreme chance of anyone becoming curious enough to ask questions, which could be easily parried by

a rudimentary knowledge of the names of the local camps and commands, and the excuse of hunting a horse.

The life for a few weeks became a series of picket duties and it was weird at night to see the searchlight crawling all over a hill on which you were crouching at the base of the offensive side. By its brilliant light it showed every twig of underbrush, every shape amongst the boulders, lingering as if it had discovered something, it might be your picket, with nothing behind this great eye but inky impenetrable darkness, holding possibilities of sudden rushes, cold steel and all the terrors of the unknown power of the dark.

The camps gradually became more organized, forges were fitted up and blacksmiths employed for the repairs of wagons and the shoeing of horses who suffered much from tender feet on account of the rocky nature of the country. Some of the horses also began to die from "horse-sickness," but the Republicans did not lose many in proportion to the loss of unacclimatized animals imported by the enemy. The majority of the horses already captured fell victims to this disease, but that did not prevent the most daring attempts to obtain more. The garrison of Ladysmith were compelled to place their horses to graze on the flat in the bend of the Klip river, and burghers, descended on foot by night lying concealed close to the feeding ground until morning. When the horses commenced to scatter, the raiders dashed in between them on foot, and separating some from the herd, drove them towards the Boer lines. This drew down upon them a hail of rifle and maxim fire, from which the stock were the general sufferers, but the raiders usually succeeded in returning to camp the richer by one or two sound animals, the British losing many more killed by their own fire.

The health of the army was wonderful when you con-

sider that the greater proportion of the men had been used to the best of care and shelter before the rapid mobilization. It had rained almost continuously since the outbreak of hostilities, and the few intervals of sunshine were of so short duration, they presented little drying capabilities. Blankets were always wet and caked with mud from lying on the bare ground without tents, clothing was in the same state, light shoes refused to stand the strain, breaking from the soles and allowing the mud free passage. Socks were unobtainable, and the food was bad and irregular. The bread was baked in Pretoria by Boer women who had volunteered for the service, but beside not being very delectable it also became green and mouldy before it reached the army. In spite of the enormous stores of biscuits and canned goods captured at Dundee, owing to a disorganized and badly manipulated commissariat, these stores imperatively needed to fill an emergency gap, were, through imperfect distribution almost invisible, and to some commandos, unknown. Coffee was hard to obtain but there was an abundance of fresh meat which was the chief article of sustenance. Cooking vessels were also difficult to procure, the ones most used, being looted household utensils. Waterpots, wash-boilers, tins and other articles never designed for such purposes, every article capable of holding water being utilized, mostly too large and totally unpractical for small messes. With these vessels we baked, stewed or roasted the recurring meats supplemented by supplies of vegetables and poultry foraged from the neighboring farms. Yet lawyers, doctors, professional men and farmers rivaled each other in these culinary efforts, smiling through their untrimmed beards in an attempt to impress each other that the one thing better than being continually wet, was to eat insufficient and unwholesome food.

Chapter V

Assault on Federal guns—Boer discipline—Surprise Hill—Death of Spannier—Manufacture and repair of guns in Pretoria—Arrival of Buller—Artillery duel—The Boer positions—Battle preliminaries—The battle—Captured guns and prisoners—Ambulance incident——Gen. Botha—English newspaper reports—Foreign attaches.

THE Federal siege gun had been moved from the original position and placed on a hill called Gun Hill southeast of the town under the *kranze* (brow) of Lombard's Kop. On December 8—800 Colonial troops from Ladysmith made a night attack upon this position and succeeded in bursting the breech and muzzle of the Creusot, completely destroying a six-inch Howitzer and capturing a maxim Lee-Metford, which had been taken from Jameson in his raid of 1896. It was well planned and daringly carried out. Missing the cluster of pickets at the foot of the hill, the 300 who did the work reached the top before being challenged from behind. The picket, possibly asleep, aroused by the sound of the falling rocks, which the scaling force dislodged, shouted a warning too late, and although in proximity to the British reserve, they gamily commenced to fire into the rear of the expedition. The guards of the gun relying on the picket, were also asleep, and being awakened by the storming party they fled, when the Colonials deliberately completed their mission without anything to contend with but the picket they had passed at the foot of the hill.

This small force of eight men among whom was the sixteen-year-old son of State Secretary Reitz, offered what resistance they could. Lying in the dark they watched the return of the expedition, heard the pass-words and were

remonstrated with for shooting, the English thinking they were part of their own force who had made a mistake. Alone, they succeeded in capturing five prisoners, killing and wounding twenty-two, Captain Paley of the British force being killed. The Boer picket of the original eight lost three killed and two wounded, but the three sound survivors brought in their prisoners and received praise for their stamina in staying at their position and inflicting the damage they had succeeded in doing. By reason of the lack of discipline and inclemency of the weather there were only ten men in the position at the guns, the men having shirked their duty in a manner to make the assault effectual. We had been transferred to the Tugela position some days before, and welcomed the change on account of the exposed position the guns were left in every night through this negligence. With a maximum guard of forty men it had been our nightly duty to toil through the mud and rain to this hill, a mile from the nearest camp from which reinforcements were possible. If nothing occurred it had been the habit of the burghers to stand their guard and then retire to camp or some convenient shelter which offered less exposure to the weather. Tents were nearly unknown and beyond crawling beneath a wagon, the entire day and night was passed in the open, when other shelter was not to be secured. The result was that to greet the daylight a guard of only five or six men constituting the morning watch were available. Those whose sense of duty constrained them to stay had to lie in the rain after their watch. Wet through, in an exposed position and rolled in their soaking blankets, weariness, and the natural heat generating steam from the wet clothes, forced them to sleep, to awaken at daylight so stiff and miserable in body and mind that an energetic resistance was beyond human power.

Commandant Weilbach of the Heidelberg Commando and Major Erasmus of the Staats-Artillerie were court-martialed for this reverse and disrated. Commandant Weilbach had figured bravely in the capture of Jameson, and the maxim now lost. His only fault was being unable to persuade the burghers to an obnoxious duty he could not enforce. Major Erasmus was afterward reinstated, but never recovered the confidence of his men, many crediting him with liability for the disaster.

The Imperial troops, not to be outdone by their volunteer comrades made an attack two nights later on Surprise Hill north of the town, and succeeded in destroying another six-inch Howitzer under very similar conditions to those of the first attack. One sad event was the death of Mr. Spannier, an American for a few years associated with the consulate of his country in Johannesburg. Falling back on the trenches from the advance picket at the time of this assault he was challenged, but replied in English with a request not to shoot. As this was a ruse frequently used by the enemy, he was fired at and shot by his Dutch comrades whose cause he had espoused. Falling wounded, he was despatched with bayonet thrusts by the British when they took the field. His body was recovered the next day with the one rifle wound and the four bayonet stabs administered afterward. The Republicans expressed great regret at this sad mistake and he was accorded the exceptional honor of a military funeral in Johannesburg. After these two reverses the discipline was better enforced, although the rank of the burghers in no way regarded the loss of the guns a calamity but rather as a matter of humor, recounting the various details of the events which had led to the possibility of their destruction.

The six-inch Creusot was shipped to Pretoria where the

ZULU KRAAL AND WARRIORS AT MEAL TIME

shop improvised by the government under the supervision of Leon and Grundberg (representatives of the Creusot gun-works) successfully shortened the muzzle eight inches, and cut twelve inches off the breach. They drilled a new chamber, fitted it with a new breach, and, the gun being indented by a charge exploded on the top, it was bored out and newly rifled, and after a successful trial returned to the armory with no loss but a thousand metres of its range. They also replaced the Howitzer with a completely new gun, in no way inferior to the one destroyed and entirely manufactured in the government shops. In the construction eight inch steel was used for the barrel and twelve inch iron for the jacket, with an additional bronze jacket shrunk on, a feat most creditable to the government and the engineer who completed the work.

A dynamite gun was also manufactured in Johannesburg but burst on its first discharge at the artillery trial grounds in Pretoria. There were no casualties as it was fired by a long lanyard, the general make-up of the gun not meeting the approval of the operating artillerymen.

To return to the armies, the British south of the Tugela had been growing more active for some days, and with the arrival of Sir Redvers Buller, who had made his boast that he would eat his Christmas dinner in Pretoria, it caused the Republicans to reinforce their positions at Colenso with all the available men to be spared from the investment of Ladysmith.

The Tugela river averaged about 120 feet in width and was fordable in five or six places in the immediate neighborhood of Colenso, when not swollen by rain. It ran swiftly, being broken by falls and cataracts surrounding which were deep holes and dangerous crossings, but the Boers except for a period in November, used the fords

for wagons and horses (as the quickest method of crossing) in preference to driving or riding around to the bridges.

On December 10, as if to announce the arrival of the new commander-in-chief, and the terrible punishment he had in store for all who interfered with his dinner engagement, we were surprised to see in the afternoon, a cloud of dust toward Chieveley. There had been no previous demonstration against the Boer positions and we wondered what was going to occur. As the dust approached we saw it was raised by a battery of artillery supported by a squadron of cavalry. They wheeled into position and unlimbered at 3,500 yards range, and the manœuvre was not so impressive that we failed to take cover and await developments. We had not long to wait for they commenced at once with shrapnel to search the hills where we had disappeared. The Boers had one Creusot field gun, the crew of which had received orders not to fire or expose their position unless there was a direct attack, but fortunately for us who considered this sort of thing a little one-sided, one of the British shells killed the pet horse of the artillery sergeant, and on his own initiative he fired the first Republican shot. It was a solid one, which landed directly between the enemy's guns, and he quickly followed it with six more, the last of which threw one of the centre guns in the air. The demonstration was apparently finished and five guns and a squadron of cavalry retreated, raising a little more dust than they did in the advance, followed until out of range by shrapnel from the offended artillerymen.

Immediately a Red Cross ambulance came down and picked up their wounded, the broken gun remaining on the field until night, when it was removed under cover of darkness. It was a most impressive and inspiring

sight to us who had not been accustomed to the manœuvres of regular army drill. The perfect precision with which they had wheeled into position and unlimbered made the impression, but the inspiration was drawn from the easy manner the one French gun disposed of their aggressiveness.

The shrapnel used by the British in this demonstration was different from that which was used afterwards. It was either very out of date or an experiment, and appeared to ascend upon the discharge and expend its force in soaring, instead of striking laterally. The sound on the iron roof of a shanty in which many of us took refuge, gave the impression of a hailstorm as the pellets fell, and many burghers, as they exposed themselves were struck by the bullets without receiving a bruise.

Most of the Republican positions for the defense of Colenso were on the north slope of the river shed and were generally formed by six small hills opposite Colenso and in a bend of the river. This was the centre, the west flank being a trench on the open slope running parallel to the river for 2,500 yards where it adjoined Grobler's Kloof in which was *eschanzed* one Creusot field gun. On the east they had possession of Hlangwana mountain, on the south bank of the river, and due east of the centre, two thousand yards. The British had perforce to advance down the south shed without cover except what the houses in the town afforded, and the numerous fortifications they had built themselves around the town, before they abandoned this position in the beginning of November.

About noon of December 13, General Buller advanced six naval guns within 7,000 yards of the hills in the centre, and bombarded incessantly for six hours with lyddite, solid shot and shrapnel, but without response, or

indication that there was a gun or a Federal within the hammered area, although 2,500 men under Louis Botha were watching anxiously every discharge of these new engines, to them an unknown quantity. The next day he advanced his guns a thousand yards and shelled for many hours, following the hills rock by rock but could get nothing from them to indicate they contained anything alive.

It was our amusement to picture the chagrin of these artillery officers throwing tons of death-dealing material without the satisfaction of seeing even a runaway horse to denote the terror and destruction these big guns and lyddite were to create.

The third day the British, under command of General Sir Francis Clery made an attack simultaneously in three columns. Hlangwana Hill, the Boer left, was a mountain about 600 feet high of precipitous nature, covered with scrub timber, cacti and tremendous boulders. It stood isolated on the south bank and was undoubtedly the key to the Colenso situation as its possession by the British would allow an enfilading fire to rake every position possible to hold on the north side of the river, in dispute of the passage of the troops at the fords.

Instead of making it the centre of operations the cavalry and one battery attempted its capture. They were repulsed after a short engagement with the loss of one life and two wounded, to the force of 500 Boers, to whom, without artillery, the defense had been entrusted. The British cavalry, composed of volunteers were severely punished, and the position was never threatened.

The attack on the right wing of the Federal position was made by infantry supported by artillery, across an open decline of 3,000 yards sloping to the banks of the river. It was an impossible task and a massacre, from

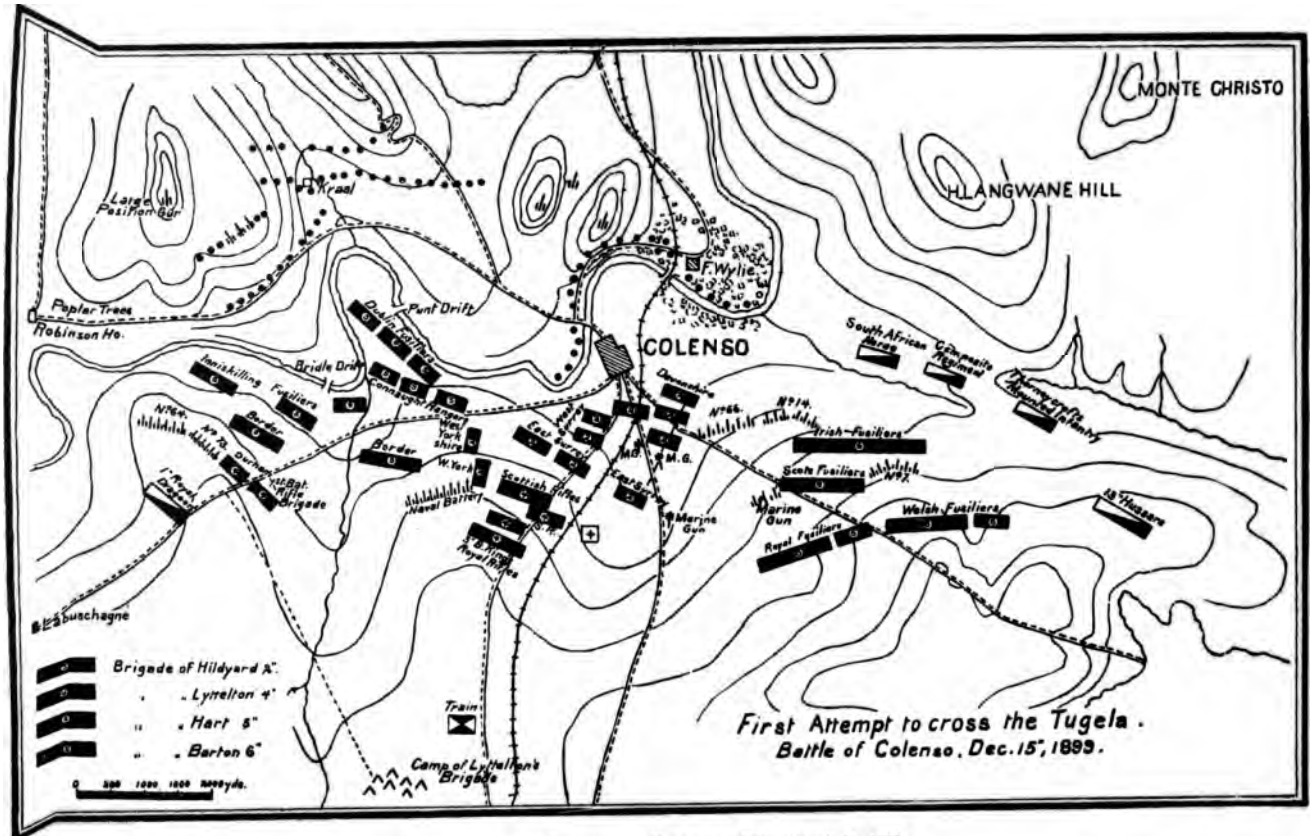


DIAGRAM OF THE BATTLE OF COLENSO, DECEMBER 15, 1899

the time they came within range of the rifles. The Republican Creusot field gun at Grobler's Kloof was all the artillery available to repel this attack, but with the Swazieland Police entrenched on the north bank, supported by a Lee-Metford maxim captured from the British at Dundee, an excuse for the failure to force this passage of the river was unnecessary, but the commanding officer of the British considered it advisable to state in his report that wire entanglements were placed in the river, which there were not, and that the ammunition was exhausted, which is possible, as the British infantrymen carried only seventy-five rounds in this battle, but this did not bear on the situation, as holding their positions on the open flat with or without ammunition was an impossibility.

The Republicans had already destroyed the railroad bridge to guard against assault by siege train, which to them, was then also an unknown force, and the centre protecting the town fords and the iron wagon bridge, was the most threatened. The weight of artillery thrown against these hills was terrific. No one on either side had before now, any conception of what it meant to receive the bombardment of seventy modern guns of all calibres over an area of less than 400 acres. Although the Boers endured it often at later dates, none who have not been through the experience can conceive how impossible it appears, at the first initiation, for anything to preserve life in the threatened area.

The noise of the traveling and exploding shells was without cessation for four hours. The whir-r-r-r of passing projectiles, the terrific concussion of exploding lyddite, the song and the bu-z-z of the irregular fragments hurled with fearful velocity in every direction from the point where these masses of iron burst, accompanied by a continuous rattle of musketry so regular that no rifle

but your own seemed to have an individual sound, made every man realize that we were engaged in the most serious affair of life and death hitherto encountered. We personally concluded it was the time to cash in, for the most our chips were worth: working our rifles until the intense heat seared our hands and arms with blisters, and shooting at every man that came within range, in efforts to secure a foothold under cover of their artillery fire on the banks of the river.

This attack was also made by infantry, and the British hardihood in placing two batteries within 900 yards of the river, was calculated to shake the confidence of the most sanguine. The two Pom-Poms and the one Creusot field gun handled by the Staats-Artillerie, were operated by the Boer youths forming that force, who by their aggressiveness concentrated the enemy's ponderous artillery fire upon themselves, but continued work fearlessly until eleven o'clock, when the enemy shot from their advanced guns, took refuge in a donga (washed-out sluit) a few feet in the rear, from where they found it impossible to advance or retreat.

We watched and tried to frustrate the two plucky attempts to save the isolated guns, in one of which the son of Lord Roberts lost his life and we saw but could not hinder the third and successful trial, when the British took two of the guns away under circumstances of great difficulty and bravery. The Boers marveled and so expressed themselves, that human life should have so slight a valuation, that it should be wasted to regain these pieces, which represented to them nothing but dollars and cents, and a mistaken view of honor to the British, who were willing to lay down their many lives to retain, that for which the Boer would not risk anything. The burghers knew that the British had endless facilities for replacing

the guns and they did not count their victories by guns captured, but by the men slain and strategical advantages gained.

The advanced British who were able, made a hurried retreat, and mustering on Chieveley Hill, they were reformed, and in plain view, made three advances in skirmishing order to cover or recover the ten guns remaining on the field. When within range each attempt was met by a well-directed shrapnel fire from the Republican guns, causing them to hastily retire. In their second failure they were greeted on their return by the fire of their own guns, and in the third, in view of both armies, in addition to enduring their own guns, they were charged by cavalry riders, probably officers, and we could see the flash of sabres, wielded in the endeavor to stop the stampede, but without success, the panic-stricken troops streaming past them in a wild scramble to reach safety.

Although this coercion of their own troops with their artillery had been previously employed at Dundee, and was afterward repeated, this was not the first time it had been used this day. The troops who had succeeded in gaining the town and the toll-house on the south end of the bridge had, on the retreat, dreaded to cross the zone of fire necessary to reach safety. To help their decision, their own guns had been turned on them, forcing them to take the least evil and fall back. There was no possibility of mistake, there was not a Republican within 900 yards of these men, and the British officers knew it. Both incidents occurred within plain view of all the Republicans watching from the central defense, conjectures being expressed as to why fire was so directed, until the gruesome conviction became obvious, when the Dutch had too much chivalry to shoot on troops in so humiliating a predicament.

The battle was over, 2,500 men, two field guns and two Pom-Poms had successfully repulsed the attack of 25,000 men and seventy guns, with a loss to themselves of three killed and twenty-two wounded. Louis Botha did not care to expose in the open, any of his small force on the opposite side of the river as long as the phalanx of infantry hung threateningly on the hill. The Boers took many months to learn the extent to which the British regular troops became demoralized after a severe defeat.

After leisurely taking a lunch of the contents of the saddle-bags and going to the river to wash and water their horses, as the British made no further movement, some of the more adventurous burghers, crossed the fords and took prisoners the 228 men still lying in cover behind the deserted guns. Then they started by hand to drag the guns down closer to the river, with a view of protecting them with rifle fire until night, when some method could be devised to get them across under cover of darkness. The stragglers, picking up the weapons discarded in the flight, scattering on the slope toward the British forces, got so close to the enemy as to afford an extempore outpost and develop the extraordinary fact that the defeat had paralyzed their power of offensive. They were on the defensive against 2,500 men. Rising to the situation, the Republican commanders quickly sent for the only two available artillery teams, and the cannon were pulled 400 yards up the railroad toward the enemy to enable them to cross the railroad embankment, then 600 yards parallel toward the approach of the bridge, which they crossed, following the exposed road for a thousand yards on the north bank before the gun could be placed in cover behind one of the hills that formed the Boer defense. These two teams made this extraordinary trip in the open, seven times in the afternoon, before they had the ten guns and

thirteen limbers under cover, without once being fired upon by the remainder of the British artillery.

The cannon were in good order, but had been unsponged during the morning fight. The limbers contained 1,250 rounds of ammunition, disposing of the report that they had been handled until they ran out of ammunition.

The prisoners were marched across the ford, declared in Buller's despatches impassable on account of high water, which in no place reached the stirrup. An accident occurred in connection with these prisoners, two burghers with rifles slung on their backs were slightly in advance of the force intended to disarm the British, under the mistaken impression that they had surrendered. They were met by a volley which killed one of them named Hans Nel which made the third Federal death of an eventful day. The British were quickly surrounded and warned by Commandant Derksen to surrender at once, which they decided to do. Colonel Bullock in command, thought that to yield to the burghers it was necessary to fall into line and stack arms, an illusion soon dispelled when a Boer seized his revolver, unbuckling the belt for him. In an effort to save his coveted field-glasses from the same fate and preserve the dignity he considered necessary for these functions, he got into an altercation with another burgher, which ended in failure to save the glasses and a discolored eye.

Another incident which might be mentioned: Immediately upon the retreat and before the Boers had occupied the field, twelve British ambulance wagons rolled down toward the river. General Botha sent word under the flag of truce, that if they did not stay off the field until the possession of the guns was decided, he would turn his artillery upon them, and the ambulances at once withdrew. This course was fully justified by evidence gath-

ered as regarded the use of ambulances, or ambulanc equipments by the enemy, and one of their generals i reported to have said that it was legitimate warfare t employ the Red Cross teams for a gun that would b otherwise disabled.

Even on a battle field there is always humor, and th advice showered on General Botha by the men of hi command gave its share of amusement to those unfamilia with the burghers. His age being but thirty-six many c the older burghers had most strenuously opposed his ap pointment to the command. Even after this victory the were not completely satisfied, and insisted as they crowde around him, in delivering at the top of their voices, cau tions as to the method to be adopted in becoming pos sessed of the guns. Now as afterwards he listened t every man carrying a rifle, but allowed them in no way t balk his magnificent grasp of economy in every uni with an army taxed to its utmost resources, and his kee knowledge of detail necessary to defending a great terr tory against overwhelming odds.

We read with amusement later in the English paper about the Englishmen that crossed the river and storme the hills, we read of a gallant bugler that bugled in th storm, winning for himself a silver bugle presented b the hands of royalty. The only English that crossed tha day went over under an escort, as prisoners. When a army that finds it necessary to shoot down its own me in the field, has to be bolstered at home with this absur sort of pageantry, there must be something very rotte in its formation or the cause in which they were electe to fight.

On the battle field were scattered a number of Gener Sir Francis Clery's orders for the day, from which th Republicans were able to see the strength and distribu

COLENSO. BOER DEFENCES AND WAGON BRIDGE

tion of the forces with which they were engaged. The English loss was reported at 897 killed and wounded with ten guns captured and one destroyed, probably the one mentioned in the artillery duel of the tenth.

The Federal artillerymen not understanding the mechanism of the captured Armstrongs, these guns were shipped to Pretoria and experimented with until enough men became proficient in their use, when they were sent to the Free State to reinforce the artillery on that border, which was extended over a larger fighting area than the forces in Natal. One of the favorite British fables was that the Federal artillery was entirely officered by foreigners, when the direct opposite was the fact. Beyond Sam Leon who instructed them in the use of the six inch Creusot and Major Albrecht naturalized for twenty-five years in the Orange Free State, the guns were entirely manned by citizens of the country, and of such youthful years as to cause comment to all spectators.

The foreign attachés were not permitted to join the British forces at this battle, but were afterwards given the information necessary for them to possess by General Buller, three days after the fight. In contrast to the conduct of the Republics who placed no restrictions on the members of the foreign armies assigned to duty with their forces. These officers freely circulated at will and no information they desired was held from them, and they succeeded in seeing everything in the neighborhood they wished. Their reports, although not completely in favor of Boer military methods, are a glowing commendation of the general conduct of the war, all returning to their countries ardent Pro-Boers.

Chapter VI

Sir William Butler—The situation on the fighting lines—Buller's message—Christmas day—Flies—Patroling—Helmets—The battle of the Platrand—Villebois Muriel—Ignatius Vermaak—Football under difficulties—Mrs. Krantz.

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM BUTLER, before relieved of his command as chief of the British forces in South Africa, for alleged sympathy with the Republics and attempting to dissuade his country from forcing a war, had seen clearly the probable course of events. He had advised the abandonment of Northern Natal to the Tugela, a garrison of fifty thousand on this river to stem the further southern advance of the Republicans, and an army of 100,000 to make the march upon Pretoria via Bloemfontein. He was relieved as incompetent to be succeeded by Sir George White, Sir Redvers Buller, and Lord Roberts in succession, the latter adopting his plan of campaign. After Northern Natal had been overrun, with loss of prestige to the British, the situation was all Sir William Butler had predicted, excepting the siege of Ladysmith.

The position, roughly, on December 20, was that the Federals were attempting with 30,000 men to hold an unbroken cordon of over 700 miles and keep in siege three garrisons, aggregating 28,000 men and 100 guns. Attempting to relieve these garrisons and opposed to their lines of defense were, in Natal, Buller at Frere, having at his command 39,000 men, eighty-four field guns, a mountain battery and twelve naval guns. The 4.7 guns, used lyddite, solid shell and shrapnel, the naval 12 pounders using solid shell. White was invested in the rear of the Republican line of defense, with 21,000 men

and seventy guns, causing a constant menace to the 15,000 burghers endeavoring to control both forces.

In the Cape Colony, General Methuen was at Modder river in the extreme west, with 20,000 men and thirty-eight guns. General French was at Naaupoort with 4,000 cavalry and twelve field guns. General Gatacre formed the centre at Sterkstroom with 33,500 men, twenty-six field guns and six Howitzers. All the towns in the rear of these British forces or on their lines of communication were also garrisoned, and a force under Colonel Plumer was threatening the Republics on the north, whose defense was crippled by the siege of Kimberley and Mafeking. The Federals were conscious that any break in their long-drawn line meant the downfall of their entire system of defense, yet their critics gravely argue that they ought to have assumed greater offensiveness against numbers numerically so superior in both men and guns. So both forces lay watching each other, the English, fearing further defeat, awaited reinforcements, the Republicans were afraid to make an advance and leave the invested cities with their garrisons in the rear, fearing they would break through their chains and outdistance them to Pretoria. In Natal no large conflict occurred for ten days after the battle of Colenso, but Boer scouts would cross the river or went out from Hlangwana Hill to obtain food, capture horses, or harass the enemy's outposts, and daily skirmishes occurred.

General Buller's message to the besieged force, that he could not render them further aid for some period, was an open secret among the burghers. There was no censor or even any attempt at secresy among the members of the war councils, in regard to subjects discussed by those bodies. If it did not vitally concern some important projected movement, the judgment of these councils was

debated in the rank and file immediately the members were released, and communications between the opposing generals were open to inspection and comment from the humblest, but, beyond this, all intercepted messages, correspondence, and other information gained by the intelligence department, if not absolutely demanding suppression for the benefit of the states, was treated to the same democratic usage. This being the case although throwing the Republican army open to severe offsets, placed every intelligent member of it in a position to instruct many of the highest of the enemy in the plans of the commanding generals of both forces.

In the pastime of mud-slinging in which the British war office chiefs are now indulging, the information that Buller had advised a surrender of the besieged garrison has fallen as a bomb upon his own army and the English public, nearly two years after the delivery of the message. For that period the burghers had known it as an assured fact and only now marvel that England has not gained this knowledge before. Probably when the generals have vilified each other sufficiently, England will be equally surprised to learn that Sir George White, after receiving the message, not only made one attempt but several to obtain dignified terms whereby he could surrender the town, coupled with the individual liberty of himself and his men, and that only the uncompromising stand of General Joubert for an unconditional surrender, prevented this modified submission being an assured fact. Yet this is part of the known but hitherto unwritten history of the siege, and the reason why such events should now call for so much criticism in England belongs to the category of those mysteries which has been studiously suppressed throughout, by the war office and its satellites.

Christmas was spent in the trenches. The British sol-

dier had, as we were informed by the English papers, received a box of chocolate from their Queen, and other seasonable delicacies from the general public. The women of the Republic, under the leadership of Mrs. Reitz, the noble-hearted wife of the state-secretary, organized to cook cakes and pastry for the men of the Federal army. Through this means, and an open subscription among the non-combatant residents, the burghers were supplied with all manner of luxuries for this anniversary, which even took the form of silk handkerchiefs, spurs and other articles dear to the heart of one campaigning. Sports were indulged in, liberal prizes given in money and kind, and the dawn was welcomed by volleys of rifle fire and cannon, directed toward Ladysmith, the shells having had their explosive charges withdrawn, and plum puddings, cakes and billet-doux substituted for the original death-dealing material.

In idle hours, rifle practice was indulged in, ammunition being recklessly wasted, and every sort of target used, until it became dangerous to hunt horses in the hills. Several accidents were reported before any attempt was made by those in command to restrain this wanton waste. In spite of threatened fines and other punishments, this interference was abortive and this state of affairs continued until their armies were driven east of Pretoria, when ammunition became so scarce the burghers were satisfied to harbor the supply as a means of self-preservation.

T. M. C. Nourse, a Johannesburg man and distant relative of General Botha's wife, then serving with the British intelligence department, was captured in company with Glendinning, an ex-butcher of Pretoria, while trying to locate a new ford to cross the river. As prisoners they were greeted by many who had known them before the

war. These reunions constantly occurring between members of the opposing forces.

By the numbers of unburied horses that had died of sickness or of wounds and the period the camps had been in one location, the flies now became an intolerable nuisance. There was no peace for horse or man from daylight to dark. They settled in swarms on the eyes of loose horses, or on any part where the skin had been broken and caused great sores, the heads of many horses presenting, when discovered, a horrible appearance. Cooking without a liberal assortment of flies mixed in the food was a luxury unknown. The intense heat and impossibility of rest without perpetual motion, forced a more strenuous activity, and volunteers could always be found for any demonstration or excursion suggested. The English dead on the neutral territory between the armies were a horrifying sight. In spite of the armistice granted the British after the fight, for the purpose of burying the dead, this office had been insufficiently performed, and vultures tore at their awful feast within view of both combatants.

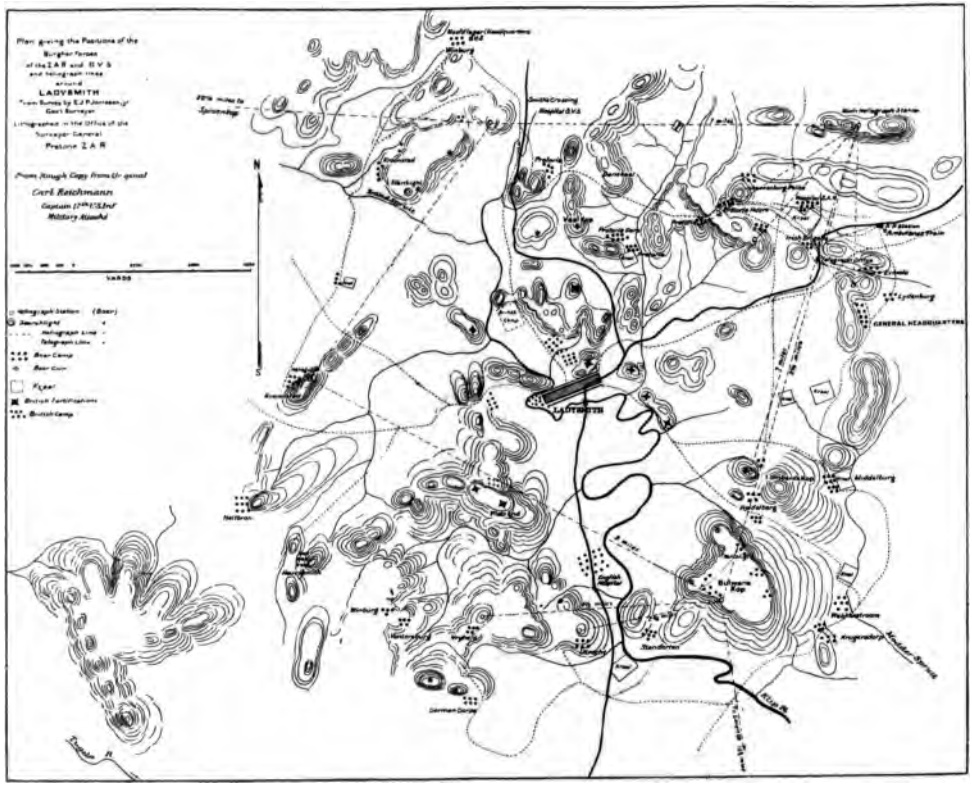
At the commencement of hostilities both armies were so uncertain of the prowess of each other, that, as the work of making themselves better acquainted advanced, a variety of curious incidents were ever occurring, which, but for the grave attending danger, would have been most amusing. Those to whom scouting duties had been assigned contributed their fair proportion of interest to their comrades. One of these happened during the manœuvre, the day before, and preliminary to the battle of Modderspruit. Ordered out in company with twenty-nine others, under Veldkornet Barend Badenhorst, for the purpose of reconnoitering the positions facing Lombard's Kop, was one of the authors. Mounted as we were, rapid and

most incautious progress was made through the stunted thorn trees until four of us, acting as forerunners, passing over a slight elevation, found ourselves in the front of a whole battalion of men not fifty yards away, who, lying prone behind the dip of a creek, were all aiming at us ready for the order to fire, "Alamaghtig" (God Almighty) exclaimed one named Van der Ness, abruptly, and throwing himself forward until almost level with the saddle, he wheeled his horse about and made for the rear with an amazing momentum and without further comment. The remaining three at once directed their gaze toward the cause of alarm, and "Mij Got!" (My God) exclaimed William Davel, emulating the example of Van der Ness. Frans Botha, the third and his remaining companion, when they discovered the soldiers, simply expedited matters without offering any excuse, deeming the same superfluous, the entire incident occupying less time than it takes to tell it. For some time the British soldiers had been patiently observing the entire body moving forward, and they were only waiting for the force to surmount the rise and get together, when, with a volley they hoped to annihilate the whole force, but by reason of the alarm the volley never came, and the enemy were cheated of their anticipated scoop. No time was lost in carrying the alarm to the main body behind, but Badenhorst, true to his reputation for daring, refused to believe it until he had seen for himself, and taking one of the original four with him, they dismounted and proceeded to investigate, going a little to the left of the first point of observation. The only cover after the sloping ground had been overcome was a solitary stone too small to shelter two men, but for this both made. They at once became the targets for the battalion of the King's Royal Rifles opposite, who now realized they had been discovered.

The scouts crouched until it became so hot, that finally one, then the other dashed out, running for the rear and shelter, a distance of about 400 yards. The shower of rifle bullets was so great that, although both miraculously escaped unhurt, the veldkornet had no fewer than seven punctures in his clothes and shoes. The other was awarded the enviable notoriety by his comrades of having broken the world's record. The British soldiers, had they not exposed their heads with their ponderous helmets, could not have failed capturing or killing our small force, as we most certainly would have walked unsuspectingly into the ambuscade. Throughout the campaign these helmets, covered with khaki duck, have served sometimes as a beacon of warning, and at others as a death warrant of their wearers, and it is nothing short of a marvel that they are worn by the English army in South Africa even to-day.

A most determined effort was made to become possessed of Ladysmith on January 6, which was also a new feature in the fact that the Republicans with a bravery difficult to equal, stormed continuously for twelve hours, positions strongly held and defended, and considering that it was their first aggressive attempt, to capture a fortification in a hand-to-hand combat, they acted most creditably. On the afternoon of the fourth all the laagers were asked for volunteers to hold themselves in readiness, with one day's provisions, for a destination unnamed. Great stress was laid on the fact that the expedition was dangerous, to give to those of weak spirit a chance to drop out, and at ten o'clock on the night of the fifth these volunteers commenced to concentrate toward Cæsar's Hill, from the various commands scattered along the lines on the Tugela.

Cæsar Hill was a table land about a mile square, ad-


LADYSMITH
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

joining and overhanging Ladysmith, with a gentle slope toward the south, where it broke off perpendicularly in a ravine about 300 feet deep, which climb had to be negotiated under fire, before the Boers came in contact with the British firing line. Wagon Hill was a further rocky eminence, standing alone on the table land or *platrand,* and guarding the western approach. It was therefore a position of considerable strategical importance and strongly fortified.

The attack, made at three in the morning under command of General Louis Botha, succeeded in getting a foothold at two points. The defenses were a complete wall built around the crest of Cæsar's Hill, and loopholed in a manner to make it impossible to see anything of the defenders. The Federals held their advantage until daylight, when the British having reinforced, the fighting became most keen. Three times the Boers were repulsed from their hold on the summit, to again take possession. Wagon Hill, from which the English had retreated, was untenable for either combatant. Again and again the Federals took possession, to reluctantly retreat under the rifle fire from the British intrenchments. Every attempt was led by Ignatius Vermaak, veldkornet of Utrecht, a splendid old patriot of sixty-two years of age, who with flowing white locks and accompanied by four sons was the first to charge and the last to evacuate, until shot diagonally through the neck and in shoulder, he died, leaving seven grown sons in arms to avenge his death.

Sir George White gave the credit for saving the day, and consequently the town for the English, to the Imperial Light Horse, a regiment raised from Johannesburg men, who had seven officers wounded. This corps showed considerable bravery, their superiority in markmanship making them more formidable than the regular soldier.

It was impossible to carry the Republican wounded from the engagement by reason of the fire-swept flat adjoining the battle field, and as Dum-Dum bullets were used freely by the English, the majority of the wounded died in the positions from the serious wounds made by these missiles. At no time were the forces far apart, conversations and taunts passing between them. One British soldier excelled in mimicry and would repeat suggestions made by the Boer officers, crying "Storm, burghers, storm!" and the proportion of British who used the Dutch language for the purpose of lure or satire demonstrated that the positions were principally held by troops from the South African colonies.

Colonel Villebois Muriel, a French officer and a daring soldier, whose opinion had great weight with the Republican leaders, accompanied the forces to the fighting line, where after scaling the hill, it was possible to snatch a gun from an unsuspecting Britisher, as he placed the muzzle through one of the portholes in the four-foot made wall, which surmounted the rimrock. With this wall the sheer ascent averaged about nine feet, and once a position was assured beneath it, it was necessary for the British soldier to lean over the top in order to dislodge a man. By hugging the wall close and keeping your eyes along the top, you could make this a dangerous experiment, but often attempted on account of the irritation to Tommy of having his gun snatched from him, as he aimed at your compatriots in the rear. The method to have made the assault of such a position a success, with the force at command, would have been by the use of hand grenades, which could have been tossed over the wall, making the British positions untenable, but without some such method, to attempt to scale such a wall in the face of the bayonets was certain death.

Christian De Wet, by his deliberate courage became noticeable in this assault, the Gordon Highlanders receiving most of his attention, although from this action it would have been guess-work to predict that in twelve months his reputation as an irregular cavalry general, would be beyond parallel in history. General Joubert was earnestly besought for reinforcements to sustain the hold already obtained, victory being always in sight, and the situation was repeatedly placed before him by courier and heliograph, but he refused to issue any orders, saying we were losing enough men. As a compromise he kept up a futile bombardment of the town from the east, to withdraw the British attention from the threatened point, which caused no relief to the over-tried burghers.

At five in the afternoon a heavy rainstorm fell adding to the discomfort of the storming force, who had been active and without food for twenty hours. Giving up hope of aid, under cover of the storm and approaching dark, a last attempt was made to force a permanent hold, to be beaten back, and the evasive replies of the Commandant-General becoming known, they retreated at dark, carrying most of their wounded who had survived the rain and the nature of the wounds inflicted by the ammunition used.

Worn out with fatigue though they were, and conscious of their own heavy losses which totalled 183 in killed and wounded, the burghers were loud in their praise of the splendid effort made by the defenders, and it was a pity that anything should have occurred to mar the feeling so expressed, but it was learned on the afternoon of the day following the battle, that the body of the veteran leader, Ignatius Vermaak, had been found stripped of all clothing by ghouls among the enemy, and his face horribly disfigured by rifle-butt or stone, so as to be, except

for his flowing white beard, unrecognizable. This was further accentuated by the later discovery, that the body of Japie de Villiers, the popular veldkornet of the Harrismith commando, who, it was known, had been only wounded in the thigh by a rifle bullet; had the neck wrung until the bone was completely broken. Apart from the wound in the thigh, there were marks on the wrists and body indicating a terrible struggle, and the face gave eloquent testimony of the agony this brave man suffered before death came to his rescue. With the knowledge of these facts, the first feelings of generosity gave way to one of contempt and anger.

It was obvious at the time, and afterward confirmed by the English general, Sir George White, that with more resources the day would have been won by the Republicans, but at this time General Joubert's age affected his mind, practically amounting to senility. His love for his countrymen, and his womanly fear of bloodshed in critical issues, made the subjection by storm of the Ladysmith garrison distasteful to him, and hearing of the large loss his burghers were suffering, he refused to risk any more lives, whereby the effect of the loss already sustained was nullified, and Ladysmith went with his timidity.

The men who had fought were disgusted with their treatment, and Louis Botha in charge of the operations, insured his future position by the redoubled confidence of the burghers. There was no further hope of winning Ladysmith by assault, and the slow process of starvation was continued as the alternative. The Boers had proved their ability to act on the offensive against a strong and difficult position, under circumstances creditable to any force, but wet and hungry, returning to their separate laagers that night, the soreness of being thus forsaken and unsupported was in the air, and the reader of signs

knew that no further attempt would ever be made, no matter how protracted the siege. The British reported a loss of 498 killed and wounded.

The armies again settled down to the humdrum of camp life and investment, watching each opposite move, with nothing to enliven the time but an occasional artillery duel, a raid for horses, or a minor affair with the scouts. If the besieged garrison appeared active, a few shells would remind them they were still under surveillance. If the Boers became too familiar on the south side the Tugela a demonstration would be made to prove that the English still disputed this territory, otherwise life was given to bathing, reading, fighting flies, discussing the fights in the Orange Free State, and circulating wild reports of deaths among the English generals.

General Joubert permitted Lady Ava, daughter-in-law to Earl Dufferin to enter the beleaguered city, that she might nurse her husband who had been seriously wounded on January 6. By the courtesy of the Republican leaders, six mules and a Boer ambulance wagon met her on the Tugela river, and escorted her through the lines to her destination.

The besiegers by no means possessed the entire monopoly of sport and humor during the weary months of waiting and watching, interrupted now and then by a spirited artillery duel between the Boer gun "Long Tom" on Insimbulwana Hill, and the British naval guns in the town and on Cæsar Hill. Inside Ladysmith the beleaguered garrison strongly contested any such aspirations, and between them, furnished many an instance in which death and irony struggled for ascendancy. At times this would take the form of a game of innocent football, quite close to the banks of the Klip river running through the town, but within plain view of, and only

4,000 yards distant from the young Boer artillerymen. The contestants would first appear, and then line up for the game, then numerous figures, presumably the spectators would be observed moving about on the slope and along the river bank. At once the artillerymen were bustling about, and the crack shots took hold, under the leadership of Lieutenant Pretorius, the best of all. The game would commence, and develop into a heated scrimmage, when suddenly the French Creusot would thunder forth, and in a twinkling an exploding shell would be tearing its way through both opponents, and touch down an undisputed first goal. Whenever they had time for it, a general scramble always succeeded, but it not infrequently occurred that after the smoke cleared away the game was resumed. This will be conceded no mean sport when it is told that upon one occasion a shell plunged into the centre of a scrimmaging party killing four. More frequently than otherwise the games were uninterrupted, and the Boer boys would form themselves into distant spectators, even taking sides, and warmly debating the issue. As a rule a few field glasses passed at short intervals from one to the other. It has occurred that whilst one spectator was most deeply interested in a move in progress, another whose turn had come would ask for the glasses, and being frequently told to wait, pull it out of the other's hands. Invariably such action was followed by an exchange of compliments. A young soldier of the Gordon Highlanders, captured at Bester's Farm, expressed his regret to a member of the Vryheid commando, that he had been scooped, as he belonged to a team which was to play a couple of days later. He also said that there were many games undecided owing to the unwelcome entry of a third contestant.

During the summer, when the flies tried all the combat-

MARTHA KRANTZ

ive energy of both armies, as a diversion, frequent forays after fruit would be made by one party, or the other, to Bester's Farm, on the southwest of the town and within gun shot of both lines. With one of these parties was Mrs. Krantz, wife of the German commandant of that name, who came so near being captured that she was compelled to climb into the loft and hide herself among a quantity of paraphernalia stored there, just as a fatherly-looking corporal and squad, entered the house from the other side.

"I tell you it was a man with a mackintosh on—they were all men," contended one of the men.

"Look 'ere, lad—no bloke can't fool Billy Soames, as 'as been marking time with a mate like Julia for seventeen year and four months. Wait till yer shod, cut dem things wot's called eye-teeth, and get your whiskers singed—then talk—you'll see straight then!" Relieving himself of this mild remonstrance which produced immediate silence, the corporal went on to say, "Lord, I don't want to take her no way. I wouldn't care to give no woman over to the Major,—even if she was me enemy—not me!" With this they passed out and started back, enabling the fair looter to escape. Such small expeditions, while entertaining, were always accompanied with danger, as attempts to obtain fruit never failed to produce sniping, and on one occasion a young Boer was shot while on the peach tree.

Chapter VII

In the Free State—Colonial irregulars—The alleged Dutch plot —De Aar—Belmont—Graspan—Massacre of Deerdepoort— Modder river — Magersfontein — Boer inertia — Stormberg — Rensburg siding—Lord Roberts arrives—Cronje outflanked— Kimberley relieved—Cronje's retreat.

THE struggle in the Free State and northern Cape Colony was being desperately contended, during this time, and it would be as well to review the situation and see how the Republicans had fared. The country, different to Natal was completely open, only broken by rivers and sluits, which cut deep into the red sandy soil, and by chains of small isolated kopjes, forming but slight protection to the operating forces. The undulating veldt was covered by a scrub mimosa brush unavailable for strategical purposes.

At the commencement of the war the British had but comparatively few regular troops in the northern part of Cape Colony, but they were supplemented by 7,000 irregulars, formed of mounted Police, Cape Rifles and innumerable militia corps of mounted infantry, who were composed of recruits from the loyal farmers, and were far more formidable than the European product. Their colonial training gave them the advantage of their compatriots, in horsemanship, marksmanship and sense of locality. Their higher degree of intelligence made them more capable of taking advantage of all available covers, a most necessary precaution against a cool and daring foe of undoubted cleverness in the same arts.

The northern part of the colony was quickly overrun by the Republicans and several inhabitants joined their forces. If the Dutch plot had existed which the English

claim, for the overthrow of the English power in their own colonies, now would have been the time for these colonies to rise, and by throwing their weight with the Republicans, they could have changed the balance of power and the English would have had to commence their reconquest from the coast. But this, as many of the ante bellum statements, had its birth in the editorial offices of the Jingo press, and the Republicans relied alone on their own resources to maintain their independence.

The important junction on the Kimberley-Johannesburg Railroad, at De Aar with military stores valued at $2,600,000 was garrisoned by but 800 infantrymen. Although extensively operating in the district this fact never became known to the Republicans until the garrison was strongly reinforced. They had considered the assault of the town, even if captured, not worthy of the necessary cost, a great error on their part and a severe criticism of their intelligence department, supposed to be exceptionally complete at this period, on account of the friendly attitude of the farmers in the invaded territory.

Stormberg and Naaupoort were occupied in the first advance, without much opposition by the regular troops and the irregular colonial forces, who had answered the first call to arms. They fell back to await reinforcements, on Sterkstroom and Middleburg, where the British were making every effort to concentrate their troops and repel further invasion of their territory.

De Aar was strengthened by General Methuen, who advanced on the Kimberley-Cape Town Railroad as far as the Orange river, where he arrived on November 12. Not considering his force sufficient to take the aggressive, he waited here until the twenty-second, when, with his field command, numbering 10,000 men, he advanced against the Federal position at Belmont. The Boers were

intrenched in four small ranges of hills and General Methuen made a night advance, attacking the position at four A. M. Opposed by a resistance of short duration, with a frontal attack in which he lost heavily, the first positions were captured at the point of the bayonet. The Boers immediately evacuated the other ranges which were successively occupied by the British. The Republican laagers, trekking from under cover of the last hills, were but a short distance on their road when Methuen became possessed, but in spite of the open country beyond the hills, incapable of an ambush, he failed to follow and make the capture, pleading in his report that his troops were exhausted. The loss to the British was 308 killed and wounded, with a large proportion of officers, as the English had not then discarded all insignia of rank, a course found necessary later to overcome the excessive mortality in this branch of their service.

The Boers lost three killed and seventeen wounded, some ammunition and several wagons which the British destroyed although short of transports themselves. Following his advantage, Methuen, two days later again attacked the Federals at Graspan, which resulted in another defeat for the Boers, inasmuch as they lost their position and territory which it governed. Methuen opened with a frontal attack in which he lost considerably, but on adopting flanking tactics, the Boers left with slight loss to themselves. The British suffered casualties to the number of sixteen killed and 169 wounded in their first attack, a form of aggressiveness responsible for the great proportionate losses, in all the early engagements of General Methuen, General Gatacre and General Buller, and obstinately followed until constrained by these enormously costly experiences to follow more common-sense methods.

In the centre of the operations, the British were advancing under General Gatacre, who reoccupied Naaupoort on November 19, but on the east, the Republicans were slowly pushing their way further east, Commandant Oliver being in command.

The Federal troops now heard with horror, the news of the massacre of Deerdepoort, on November 25. The Linchwe and Bakathla Kaffirs on the northwest border of the Transvaal, aided by English non-commissioned officers and two machine guns, attacked a small town named Deerdepoort. All the white inhabitants were put to the sword, and many of both sexes murdered. Barnard, the member of the Volksraad of that district, was killed in attempting to save the defenseless inhabitants. The disgust of the burghers at this mode of warfare can be imagined by any one familiar with their character, and the struggle they had had to subdue these Kaffirs so greatly superior to themselves in numbers. That England, with her vast resources should stoop to accept the aid of the natives, only bore out the Boers' idea of the depth to which their arch enemy was willing to descend. Not satisfied with the evidence found in Dundee regarding the employment of natives in the war, this was offered as a further proof. Now, they are also known to have been employed for the defense of Mafeking, and other savage races have been incited to commit depredations on the northern boundary, but to further the humiliation, at the present writing they are used throughout South Africa, as armed police with great license, when the white inhabitants are not permitted weapons, thereby disgusting the loyal colonials, who recognize the danger of these ignorant and blood-thirsty natives, once taught the power of their weight in number, and armed by a nation only

anxious to use every means in their present need, unconscious of any sense of duty to those who perforce must abide in the country.

This contrasts strangely with the attitude forced by the Boers upon the natives, who were never permitted or known by their sanction; to fire a shot at the English. A case in point can be mentioned of the Kaffir servant of Commandant Grobler of the Vryheid commando, having been sent to hunt horses near the enemy's line; he surreptitiously carried a gun, and discharged it at a British picket. Upon this misdemeanor being reported by an eye-witness from another commando, the offending native was flogged most severely, as a lesson to others who contemplated a similar abuse.

Sarel Eloff, grandson of the president, was immediately sent with sixty police to avenge the deed. The Kaffirs were driven over the border and their kraals burnt, but the white men were never located, though probably the roll-call of Colonel Plumer's forces at this time would furnish a clue to their identity.

General Cronje arrived on the southwest border with 3,000 men, and grasping the situation, immediately wished to storm Kimberley, but was forbidden by the government in Pretoria. Then withdrawing all the available force from the investment, he took up a position south of the town on the Modder river to stem the advance of Methuen. On November 28, the enemy in a desperate frontal attack upon his line of defense, forced in the west wing of the Federals and secured a position on the river bank, from where they could enfilade the remaining Boer trenches. The possession of the railroad bridge was bitterly contended, but also lost, and the British artillery fire then became concentrated on a smaller area. The Boers, unable to dislodge the enemy from their hold

DEERDEPOORT, NEAR THE SCENE OF THE MASSACRE

in the river, decided to evacuate in the night, and they retreated toward Jacobsdal, with a loss of twenty-eight killed and wounded. One of Methuen's batteries was reported to have fired 1,500 shells in the day, or for one gun, twenty-five an hour for ten hours. The British gave their loss as seventy-eight killed and 413 wounded, among the killed being the chief of the staff, Colonel Northcote. This high rate of mortality was again due to direct attacks.

Methuen, in reporting his casualties, termed this battle "one of the hardest fights in the annals of the British army," but perhaps this is a trifle extreme, as his loss would have been considerably less, if he had not stumbled on the mode of attack, and stubbornly insisted on its fulfilment, but by winning the position, he had succeeded in making forty-five of the seventy-five miles of his contested march from Orange river to Kimberley.

General Cronje and General De la Rey, taking to heart the lesson learned at Modder river, of the increased casualties caused by firing along the ground instead of from an elevation, intrenched their men at the foot of the Magersfontein Hill, keeping the laagers and impedimenta only, in the hills to the rear. Two hundred and fifty yards in front of the trenches was a stout barbed-wire fence, nearly four feet high, forming a ready made picket and line of defense. General Methuen reinforced until he commanded 13,000 men, six batteries and five naval guns, submitted the hills to tremendous bombardment on the afternoon of the tenth, but the Republicans in the trenches a quarter of a mile closer, were unnoticed and unharmed. That night it began to rain.

Having, by the bombardment, given notice that an attack was to be made, the Highland Brigade under General Wauchope started a night advance. In the impene-

trable darkness and wet, marching in quarter columns, held in position by ropes, they succeeded in reaching the fence in the grey of dawn, 4 A. M. Still thinking the Republicans at some distance, the front rank, without changing the formation began to climb the wire, and the wire sung. The Boers at once poured a deadly fusillade into the packed mass at a range of 250 yards. Some one shouted the order to retire. Probably it coincided with the views of the entire brigade as the correct thing, and the contemplated assault became a panic. Before the light was strong, when a man's form looked like a long grey shadow, the result was decided. In ten minutes the battle was won. Twenty per cent of the Highland Brigade were killed or wounded before they could get out of range of the awful hail, and many lay down among the scrub mimosas which covered the veldt, where they remained concealed the entire day, only retreating under cover of dark.

The division that was to have simultaneously attacked the Republican left, made a determined demonstration to cover the defeat and retreat of the Highlanders. The Republican Scandinavian corps in a heroic but mistaken attempt to take advantage of an elevation, were decimated, losing of their force of fifty-two, their commander Berendsen, Veldkornet Flyere, and forty-three men.

The horses and crews of six British batteries shot away, the guns stood deserted within sight of the Federals. Colonel Albrecht, commander of the Orange Free State Artillery, gallantly working his guns under the superior range of the heavy British artillery, balked every attempt of the enemy to recover their field pieces during daylight. The English, short of transports, and demoralized, were handicapped in their retreat to Modder river, but Cronje was so well satisfied, with this, the first decisive victory

in the Orange Free State, and saddened by his own loss, which comprised 200 killed and wounded, including the son of General De la Rey, that he made no attempt to follow his advantage and prolong the rout. Praising his burghers for their steadiness under the assault of a superior force, he said they "had done sufficient for the day." If he had incited them to further effort, the course of events would have been materially changed, but his contempt for the British, and his confidence in being able to defeat them under any circumstances, lulled him to inactivity. The advantage won by the gallantry of the artillery under Colonel Albrecht, was lost, and the deserted batteries, allowed to remain isolated until night, when the British returned and recovered them.

General Wauchope, in command of the Highland Brigade, who was killed, is reported to have made an *ante mortem* statement to his men, saying, "don't blame me, lads, it was not my fault" and it is stated that in a letter, written the night before the battle, he said, "this is the last letter I shall ever write. I have been ordered to do an impossible task." These statements sound a little drawn, but they received credence in most of the English papers. Whatever the truth, the error of the attack was evident, and a loss of 2,000 men in this and the previous engagements, for the advantages gained, was sufficient to considerably change the tactics adopted by the British in future attacks.

Methuen reported the loss of 900 killed and wounded, with fifty prisoners of the Highlanders, who, unable to retreat or defend themselves, threw down their guns and, with raised arms, ran towards the Federal trenches, from where they viewed the finale.

The lethargy of Cronje, although momentarily meeting the approval of his burghers, lost him a good deal of the

confidence of the general army, and when, after further mistakes, he was captured from a false sense of security, the event was finally conceded an advantage to the Republics.

Lack of offensiveness after a victory, was the one unredeemed fault of the Republicans in the early part of the war, until their generals realized that Cronje's assumption, that the capture of a few batteries was just an event deferred, was not practical, and few such errors were allowed to creep in, when the seriousness of the struggle was finally grasped. The burghers, as a fighting force, were unexcelled by any army, and equaled by few, but it was evident throughout the history of their defense, that while they possessed abundant force for obtaining victory, they were sadly deficient in the necessary energy, born of the most rudimentary discipline, to drive victory home, and insure the fruits of the sacrifice.

In the centre of the contending armies, General Gatacre, on November 20, was at Queenstown in command of the British forces, but advancing, he reached Putter's kraal, Sterkstroom and Bushman Hoek on November 22, 24, and 27, leaving a garrison at each village to protect his line of retreat, whereby he utilized 2,500 of his force between Putter's kraal and Queenstown.

The Boers, advancing to the hills of Stormburg, which commanded the railroad and the surrounding veldt, they fortified it, then destroyed the railroad to call attention to themselves, and give the British an invitation to come out of Putterkraal and fight.

In the meanwhile, to the south and east of Stormburg, the Federals were holding the positions they had taken, and Commandant Oliver, in command, advanced to Dordrecht on December 2. Finding many in sympathy with him among the inhabitants, he proclaimed the territory

part of the Republics, and received as recruits those who were willing to bear arms.

General Gatacre desired to reestablish railroad communications with General French at Naaupoort, for which the possession of Stormburg Junction was necessary, he therefore decided to accept the Republican invitation and attack their position. Making an advance by rail to Molteno, from there he marched by night to the assault. He did not know the road, nor had he information of how the Boers were situated, beyond vague reports from Kaffirs that they were in Stormburg Hill, which he had never seen, yet with this slight information he attempted a night surprise. After marching most of the night, and thoroughly wearying his troops, he found the Boers, just before daylight of the ninth of December.

The alarm of the British advance was given by A. J. Liebenberg, a farmer living near by, who on the night of Gatacre's approach, happened to have been on a visit to his neighbors at Onverwacht. Aroused in the early morning by the noise of the passing artillery, he hurriedly dressed, and seizing his gun and ammunition, followed on the flank of the column, until he found shelter in a sluit within 400 yards of the marching soldiers. In an agony of fear that his companions would be surprised, as he discerned in the dim light the van preparing to scale the hill, he poured into them a continuous fire from their rear, this and the answering fire giving the alarm, and producing in the enemy the dreaded suspicion that they had been outwitted, and a force attempted to dislodge him, but the alarm was already given and the Republicans alert. The 450 men that formed their entire command, quickly occupied all the strategical positions and the stampede shortly followed, leaving the spoils to the victors. With a loss to his force of two guns, two maxims, three

ammunition wagons, 683 prisoners, and 307 killed and wounded, Gatacre retreated to his garrison at Bushman Hoek, the Boers following and sniping the force, until they obtained shelter in the camps.

Between General Gatacre and General Methuen, was General French, with the cavalry brigade at Naaupoort. He had taken possession of the town on November 21, the Boers evacuating without determined resistance. Here he remained inactive over a month, then, by leaving the railroad on his right, he succeeded, by a well conceived flank movement, in ousting the Republicans from Colesburg on January 1, the Boers still retaining the railroad between Colesburg and Naaupoort. To gain control of this communication, an attempt was made in a night attack, to surprise them on a *kopje* which commanded Rensburg siding, but the Boers were prepared and retained the hill, inflicting a loss of 112 killed and wounded on the Suffolk regiment, who had made the assault under Colonel Watson. This forced the evacuation of Colesburg by French, who again fell back on Naaupoort.

On January 10, Lord Roberts, the new Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in South Africa, accompanied by Lord Kitchener, arrived at Cape Town, and they commenced the concentration of troops in Cape Colony, for the projected relief of Kimberley, and invasion through the Free State. By February 10, Roberts was at Modder river, with all arrangements made to cut off Cronje's communications with Bloemfontein. Cronje had defeated General Hector MacDonald in a direct advance along the railroad, and he was nursing the idea that this was the only road possible for a British advance. General Christian De Wet had different ideas, and regarded with suspicion the movements of the British to the east of the railroad, finally detaching himself from the main com-

GETTING READY FOR PATROL DUTY

mand to watch this manœuvre. His observations proved that the enemy were making a circuit of the Republicans, which he attempted to stay on Riet river, close to Jacobsdal, but they outflanked him, crossing lower down. Sending word to Cronje of the impending danger, and being himself in too small a force to successfully oppose, he commenced to harass the British column, hoping to delay the advance and give Cronje an opportunity to withdraw.

General French after reoccupying Colesburg, had moved west to join Lord Roberts, and on the tenth, he started from Modder river, his forced cavalry march to relieve Kimberley. Making an extreme détour and leaving the intervening Boer forces and railroad on his right, he raised the siege of Kimberley on the fifteenth, by a most brilliant march, without transport, only accompanied by his field artillery. He met but slight resistance, as the cordon of Boers under General Ferriera which invested the town, had been considerably weakened to reinforce Cronje's attempt to stop Lord Roberts. The small remaining force of besiegers were industriously bombarding the town from the east, as French entered from the southwest, but they then immediately withdrew with their artillery toward Bloemfontein. The garrison, under Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich, besieged for 122 days, losing 166 men, were never seriously threatened during the entire siege.

The enormous dumps of waste dirt from the mines, surrounded the town with a natural fortification of loose sand, varying from twenty to a hundred feet high, difficult to scale, perfect protection from artillery fire, and an almost impossible proposition for assault, which was never but once meditated, and abandoned at the intervention of the Republican government.

General French had the Boer laagers who had formed the besieging force at his mercy, as they retreated toward Poplar Grove, but with his exhausted horses he failed to push the advantage, remaining in the town two days to recuperate both horses and men.

General Cronje, on the report from De Wet, and the threatening position of French, had started to retreat from Modder river. As the colonials that had thrown in their portions with the Republicans, had brought their entire herds of cattle and sheep, he was hampered in the retreat by the impedimenta of women, children and stock, which forced him to follow the bed of the river to obtain the necessary water, considerably retarding his progress. The British followed him up on both banks, and as he refused to abandon anything, he was forced to fight a continuous rear-guard action, by parking his lighter wagons, and holding the enemy until the slower moving herds and transports had advanced some distance, when the rear guard would again make connection in the night, to renew the same tactics when overtaken the following day.

French's occupation of Kimberley became a new source of danger, threatening the retreat from the north, but the state of his horses, gave Cronje two days' grace. The British east flank, having passed General Christian De Wet, left at Waterval Drift, to follow the column, their main convoy of 200 ox wagons, under a guard of 200 infantry men. This was De Wet's opportunity, and attacking the convoy near Enslin, on the fifteenth, he captured 150 of the wagons and 2,000 oxen, being a most severe blow to the British; as the wagons and stores captured, constituted over fifty per cent of the transports for the entire army engaged in the eastern movement, under the personal command of Lord Roberts, and it delayed that

movement yet another day. De Wet, destroying what he could not take away, and considering it inadvisable to rejoin Cronje, broke away to the east. Several other commandos detached themselves from the doomed army and went out north between the horns of the two British wings now rapidly closing.

Chapter VIII

Paardeberg — Pom-Poms — Surrender — Laager conditions — A Krygsraad—The Presidents—Poplar Grove—Abram's Kraal —Bloemfontein occupied—Peace overtures—March from Colesberg—Johannesburg police.

ON February 17, two brigades of cavalry left Kimberley and succeeded in blocking Cronje from an escape to the north, and that night he went into laager at Paardeberg. In spite of the assurance of his scouts and conscious of the presence of French on his north, he still refused to believe that Roberts had outflanked him on the south, calmly preparing to spend the night in the position from which he never escaped.

The Modder river at this point was 120 feet wide, but at that time quite easily fordable at any point, with steep banks of red sandy loam on either side. He placed his camp on the north bank, and in the morning it was evident that he was nearly surrounded, escape being impossible, except by a dash and abandonment of his impedimenta. The country took the usual character of that district, being quite level except for a few broken hills a mile to the southeast. Beyond, the banks of the river and a grove of trees 400 yards to the west of the laager, the terrain offered no natural or strategical defensive advantages.

The most progressive leaders, his own cousin Andries Cronje, Froneman and Villebois Muriel, after an effort to persuade him to take this course of escape, without success, took their own following and cut their way through east, by the farm at Stinkfontein, where they surprised a post from the not yet completed cordon; and capturing this force of six officers and fifty-eight men

who belonged to Kitchener's horse, they made toward Bloemfontein.

Roberts now strengthened the siege and Cronje was surrounded with nothing to extricate him but a relieving army, or a dash for liberty with the remaining horsemen, involving the abandonment of the wagons. The bombardment commenced and continued all day, with a determined attempt to take the laager by storm and avenge all previous defeats at the point of the bayonet, but the Republicans steadily withstood every attempt, inflicting great loss to the storming party.

On the nineteenth, Cronje, without doctors or medical comfort, endeavored to get an armistice to bury his dead, and to allow the Federal ambulances at Jacobsdal to rejoin his force. Both requests were refused, the British appropriating the Boer ambulances for the use of their own wounded, and Lord Kitchener, who had promised to cease fire during the negotiations, advanced a body of infantry, as he explained "to receive the prisoners, under the impression they were about to surrender." Of course they were fired upon and the British had another incident to pin their reiterated story of the abuse of the white flag.

The bombardment of the ninety cannon recommenced and was pluckily replied to by the four pieces in possession of the Boers, until their ammunition was exhausted on the twentieth, when, having no further use for the guns the breech blocks were destroyed. The Boers had until this date held the farm and *kopje* at Stinkfontein, against frequent attempts at its capture, and constant communication by heliograph and bearer was held between General Cronje and the Republican forces outside. On this day, Wednesday, it was obvious that reinforcements could not arrive from Natal in time to effectually aid the besieged, and as Generals Oliver, Lemmer,

and Grobler with the next most important army in the Free State, were still east of Colesberg, relief from this quarter was also impossible, therefore Commandant Froneman returned to the laager and again endeavored to persuade Cronje to cut loose from everything on foot, and with his mounted men fight his way out to the east, this last channel of hope still being open through the Stinkfontein farm, but his effort had no effect on the stubborn old general, although Froneman illustrated the ease with which it could be accomplished, by taking some of his own men and going through the British lines. The enemy then determined to cut off this open passage, and French attacked the Stinkfontein Farm, and General Chermside the *kopje*. The Boers who had held these positions under De Wet were then forced to evacuate, but still remained in touch with the British lines, in hopes that Cronje would alter his decision, and attempt the dash for liberty.

The next two days were given up to constant bombardment, the artillery attaining great accuracy under the supervision of the balloon. Roberts sending in a bearer on the twenty-second—saying that he "had just been informed that there were women and children in the besieged laager" and offering them transportation to safety. This delayed act of grace was worse than completely ignoring the fact that was patent to both forces, and as the women had already been placed in bomb proof excavations, they elected to remain, to see the fate of their men folk and tend the wounded. Cronje therefore refused the offer, indeed considering it nothing but a ruse, designed to ascertain the condition of the laager.

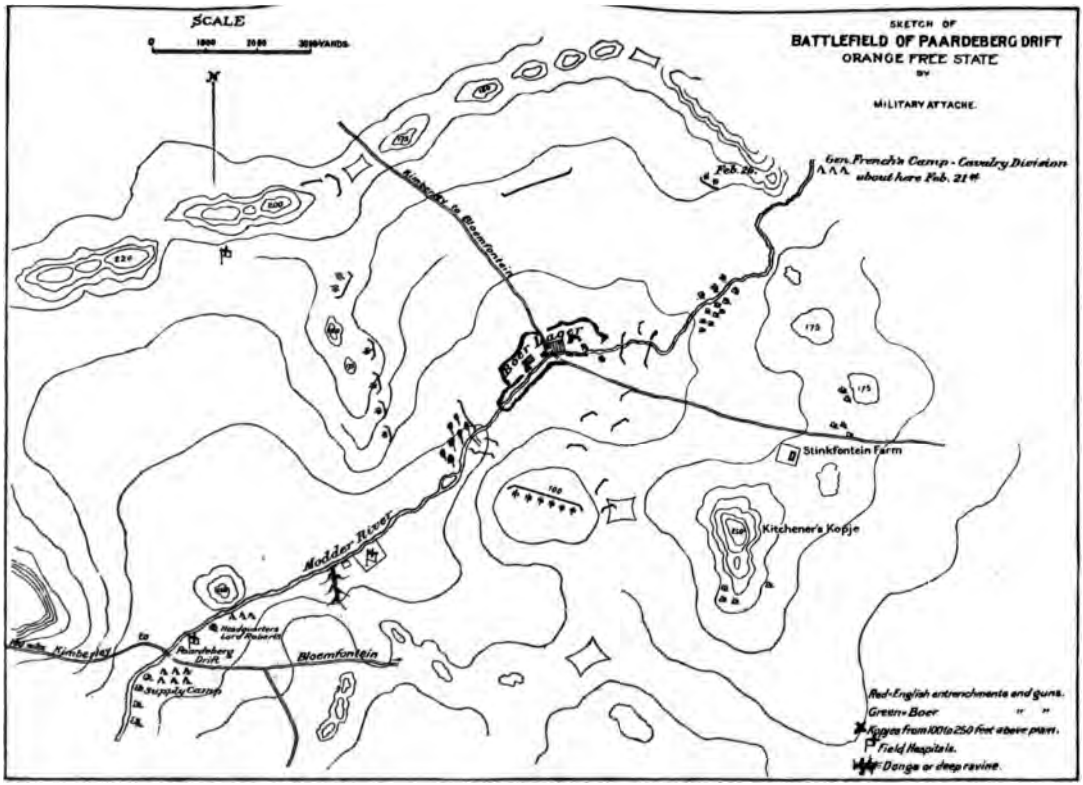
On the twenty-third, Saturday, it commenced to rain, and continued for the next four days, increasing the comfort of camp by reducing the intense heat, washing away many of the dead stock killed in the bed of the river,

and making the water once again drinkable. It somewhat purified the rank air, rising from the putrid flesh of the dead animals, but in turn, the escape south was now impracticable except by bridging the stream, by reason of the swollen, unfordable river. The forces under De Wet on this day again attacked the *kopje* on the Stinkfontein Farm, in an attempt to make a diversion, under which Cronje could escape, but they were repulsed and retreated. On the same night, Saturday, Danie Theron of Krugersdorp, the bravest of the Boer scouts, by great daring, returned to the laager with despatches from Froneman, De Wet, Andries Cronje, and Fourie urging Piet Cronje to make an effort, as relief was impossible, still he stubbornly refused and Theron returned to the generals who had sent him, who now knew beyond doubt, that Cronje and his force were doomed. The British were continuously industrious, and they had advanced their trenches until the slightest exposure in the laager became dangerous. The Boers realizing their predicament, started upon Sunday to build a chain bridge across the river, using their ox-chains as material, but by the treachery of their Kaffir servants who had deserted them, the experiment was discovered, and the concentrated British artillery upon the work, rendered the scheme abortive.

On Monday, in addition to the ninety-eight guns, the British introduced another feature, surprising the Boers by the use of some Vicker's maxims, or Pom-Poms, which they now adopted for the first time in their operations. This is the most demoralizing gun used in warfare, and had been used exclusively by the Republicans in this war up to date. It fired a one-pound shell with tremendous accuracy, at a range of 3,300 yards, and had been of untold benefit to the Boers in repelling any advancing force in all previous engagements. Now at the latter day of this

siege, this new weapon must have been most galling to endure. During the night of the twenty-sixth, the Canadians, who had held a position in the grove of trees to the west of the laager on the north bank, advanced their trenches to within 200 yards of the defenders. With these new dangers all hope was now lost; the unsanitary condition of the laager, the uncared-for wounded, and the numberless carcasses had become unendurable, and at a Krygsraad (war council) held on Tuesday the twenty-seventh of February, anniversary of Majuba day, the commandants were in favor of an unconditional surrender; General Cronje and Commandant Roos endeavored to alter the decision, but were overruled, and after a heroic defense of eleven days, the white flag was displayed in token of surrender, for the first time by a Boer general.

The condition of the laager was fearful and the British, when they became possessed, were appalled at the sight and stench. Seventy per cent of the draught animals and stock had been killed by the artillery fire, the carcasses lying in the river bed or open camp unburied. The wounded had none but the roughest of care and the general condition was such that further opposition was impossible. Yet Cronje would have attempted it, but that, in the Krygsraad always held in the Republican armies to discuss any pending movement, every commander of whatever rank, general, commandant or veldkornet, has an equal vote, and it is possible for the majority of minor leaders to overrule their superiors without appeal. In this case, the opinion was unanimously against the general and his lone supporter, and he was forced to abandon his heroic but useless resistance. There was never a doubt in the Boer military circles, that had Cronje persisted in his resolve, to fight to the death, he would have been



CRONJE'S DISASTER

overpowered by his subordinates, or even shot; owing to the terrible state of unavoidable suffering ever present.

The British captured four Krupp quick-fire guns, and two Vicker's maxims, but the breeches of the guns were lost. There were 4,081 prisoners including sixty officers, among whom was Major Albrecht, the brave chief of the Free State Artillery. Everything was counted to make this number, the old men and boys belonging to the accompanying families were not missed, but forced to leave their women and join the prisoners. The British had besieged the force since the sixteenth, with ninety guns of all calibres, and 40,000 men, and they had to find at least ten per cent of their own numbers in the garrison to extract their due amount of glory, the enemy losing in the siege 253 killed and 1,209 wounded.

Piet Cronje, patriot, sixty-five years old, by his underestimation of a brave enemy in force, had shaken the credit and faith of his countrymen, in the ultimate triumph of their cause. His surrender spread dismay through all the troops and was the indirect cause of General Buller crossing the Tugela. Defiant and stubborn, in a few months his capture was regarded as a wholesome lesson, and many Boers regretted the confidence that had permitted him the power to give his cause the crushing blow which his surrender dealt.

The English, with the additional news, on the twenty-eighth, of the relief of Ladysmith, and the Free State lying open to them until the Boers could reinforce from Natal, considered the war as finished, but Louis Botha arriving before his men, restored confidence in the remnant of burghers on the field, who were leisurely retreating ahead of the army, yet offering no opposition. An effort was made to again give battle in the open country to the invaders on their march to Bloemfontein, and at

Poplar Grove the Republicans remobilized under De Wet, forming a force of 2,500 men and seven guns. They prepared defenses with but little hope of offering any effectual resistance to the advancing legions.

President Kruger, who had a warm personal friendship for, and faith in Cronje, on having heard of his impending disaster, hurried from Pretoria with the intention of using his influence upon the General, but arrived too late. Overcome with grief, he joined President Steyn at Bloemfontein, and from there proceeded to Poplar Grove where the presidents exhorted the small force to do their best, within their limited ability, until reinforcements should arrive from Natal. The cheerful, optimistic patriotism of these two grand men, with the news of the capture and destruction of two of the English supply transports, by General Oliver, somewhat restored their confidence and with renewed hope they fought the battle of Poplar Grove, under the eyes of their presidents, but were outflanked and once more compelled to retreat toward Abrams Kraal, losing one gun in the engagement.

This retreat was conducted in perfect order, and freed of the flanking movement, the advance was contested at every vantage. Here the wagons of the Russian and Netherlands military attachés with the Republican army, broke an axle. They were captured and threatened with deportation to Europe, but finally permitted to sail from Cape Town to Lorenzo Marques, and reaching the Boer lines from there, they resumed their duties.

General Christian De Wet, with his command, then proceeded east toward Wepener and General De la Rey, who had been successfully holding back the British at Colesberg, and only forced to leave by Cronje's surrender, undertook to make a further stand with 1,500 men at Abrams Kraal. Here the Johannesburg police made a

brave and determined defense, refusing to render up their positions until their ammunition was exhausted, when, outflanked, they reluctantly made a dash for safety. 104 dead burghers were left on the field as evidence that the spirit of freedom still remained in the fighting remnant. The British casualties were 424 killed and wounded.

Nothing now stood between the English and Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State, which was entered on the thirteenth of March without the firing of a shot. The town was built on the undulating flat characteristic of that State, and was therefore impossible of defense by the force available, as the only protection was a single fort built in 1848 to withstand Kaffirs, and defended by muzzle loading guns captured from the British in an early war.

The British obtained much rolling stock, as the viaduct over which the track ran to the engine house had been treacherously destroyed by some English employés of the Republican government, who had been satisfied, for wages, to aid them against their countrymen, until the hour of need, when they forsook them, giving this parting stab. By the destruction of this bridge it was, of course, impossible to remove the engines from the sheds, and thirteen became an easy spoil. The government clerks just succeeded in removing the archives from the offices, and leaving on the last train with President Steyn, they reestablished the capital at Kroonstad where both governments united in addressing an appeal to England to cease war and resort to arbitration. That nation, drunk with its long-deferred successes, abruptly refused, replying that unconditional surrender to absolute subjection without a shred of independence were the only terms available. For once the British ministers had been caught napping by the less artful Boer leaders, who did not excel in tricky

diplomacy. The Free Staters had been giving up their arms and returning to their farms under the favorable promises of the British commander-in-chief, and with this desertion, some of the Transvaal Boers considered a like course their only possible salvation. The presidents saw that nothing but the expression of the enemy's true spirit would renew the drooping confidence, hence this appeal was made, and the known answer had the electrical effect of reestablishing, in the burghers, the spirit of independence that had wavered. This ruse was so successful that it was again worked on the British after the fall of Pretoria, with the same result.

Generals Oliver, Lemmer and Grobler, of the Federal central column, who had been operating south and east of Colesberg with success, learning of the proximity of Roberts to Bloemfontein, decided that to avoid disaster a retreat north was imperative, and a march around the British was begun. Leaving Colesberg on March 12, with a united army of 5,000 burghers, were 700 wagons loaded with supplies and farm produce, belonging to the families of that colony, who followed the army with the hope of some day crossing a Jordan that was impassable to their enemies. This great trek of wagons with herds of stock, straggled over the road a distance of twenty miles during the whole march. The men and followers composing the trek, were forbidden even to appropriate for themselves or horses, the corn which grew in the fields along the road, but had to subsist as best they could on dried meat and food purchased individually. The English had not then started the practice of desolating the country, and the Boers never did, although they now knew the entire region and crops would be left to the mercy of their enemies. Marching through Donkerpoort, Bethulie, Smithfield, Rouxville, Wepener, and Ladybrand to

THE FAMOUS FIGHTING JOHANNESBURG POLICE, PASSING THROUGH JOHANNESBURG

Winburg, only once being threatened at Ladybrand; without losing a man or a gun, they covered with slow-moving ox-wagons and herds of cattle, sheep and goats, a distance of 300 miles in thirteen days.

The Transvaal Police who so often distinguished themselves, taking the brunt of every fight where the less organized burghers could not be induced to make a defense, were a splendid body of drilled, mounted infantry and a constant proof of what the Republicans would be capable of, under a stricter form of discipline. When they first arrived in Natal they fought courageously at Nicholsen's Nek, under command of Commandant Van Dam who was wounded, and from there on, they constantly called attention to themselves for united or individual bravery. When first in the field they numbered 500 mounted men and 700 infantry, but as horses became procurable, many of the infantry joined the mounted men, and they were then the most formidable body in the Republican army, the first to every fight or skirmish in the neighborhood and the last to leave, and a large proportion of the daring personality characteristic of the war fell to their credit.

In December this force was withdrawn from Natal to act as a reserve in Johannesburg, but in February the need of men on the Free State borders was so great, they rejoined the fighting lines at Colesberg. Always to the fore, they remained constantly on duty until their remnant of organization was decimated east of Pretoria, when the survivors scattered to join the laagers where they had relatives, and thereon served as ordinary burghers.

The Swazieland Police were a separate body of 300 men, used to police Swazieland, and were as useful and prominent wherever needed, as their Johannesburg brethren.

Chapter IX

Natal—Ladysmith Dam—British trek west—The Boshrand—Trickhard's Drift—Spion's Kop captured—Fireworks—Barend Badenhorst—Spion's Kop recaptured—White flag again—Herr Von Brusewitz—After the battle.

WE left the operations in Natal after the attempt at Ladysmith on January 6, in which Buller, although knowing of the attack, gave his countrymen no aid beyond a demonstration of activity among his troops, and the bombardment of the Republican positions at Colenso.

Ladysmith was built on a flat at the foot of some small hills which ran around a semicircle or horseshoe bend of the Klip river. The town was at the apex of the shoe, the area inside the semicircle being an open flat, upon which the British could run their horses and stock, as it was protected by their positions on the hills extending to the points of the shoe, and also with trenches and maxims on the north bank close to the town.

The Republicans, unable to attack across the flat from the south, conceived the idea of damming the river a mile below the town, to flood the low-lying defenses, cover the open flat and force the defenders from their positions into the hills. This work was started, the dam being formed by bags filled with sand, laid with a base of 300 feet, but as the water rose its presence immediately became known to the British, who kept up a constant shell-fire on the work which was thereon pursued at night, but never completed. Twice it was broken by floods, and finally when the city was relieved it had only reached twenty of the necessary sixty feet in height. With the time and material at hand, from an engineering view, it was

an impossible undertaking, although the government had taken the best advice to be had. If completed it would have confined one of the largest bodies of dammed water in the world, the complete area of the horseshoe approximating five square miles.

In the middle of January General Buller again began to show signs of activity and long lines of transports were seen to trek to the west for some unknown desination, but probably to make an attempt to cross the river higher up. A call for volunteers with three days' rations was issued to follow the movement in the hills on the north side of the river, and as the British general's intention became manifest, a line of underground telegraphic communication was laid, connecting all the threatened fords with the headquarters of General Botha at Colenso.

On the sixteenth, General Buller placed his naval guns on the Boshrand, an eminence opposite Pont Drift on the south side of the river, which commanded many of the approaches to the hills on the north bank and gave him heliographic communications with Ladysmith. A branch line of railroad had been for some days in course of construction from the main track close to Chieveley to the point indicated, a distance of about eighteen miles. This line was no doubt intended to serve when completed, as an emergency feeder to the army, in its operations on the upper Tugela. For two days Buller kept up with his heavy guns, a bombardment on the position opposite, and 400 Federals trembled in their hastily constructed defenses, fearing an advance before sufficient reinforcements arrived, but on the eighteenth it was reported by the scouts that the British column had already crossed at Trickhard's Drift, five miles further west. This considerably extended the Republican line, and hastily following the hills to the threatened road they verified the report.

The troops and artillery were already across and the only possible defense was the rolling slope on the ridge of hills running parallel, at 3,000 yards from the river. Only two shovels were procurable from a deserted farm in the rear, but with these the burghers managed that night to scrape some narrow trenches guarding the road, and in this improvised shelter they underwent the next day a bombardment of six batteries. It was pathetic, this small body hanging on the brow of the hill in trenches not much deeper than the sod. Within 1,600 yards range were eighteen guns and at 2,500 yards were eighteen more, and thousands of troops manœuvred within hailing distance. If the British had only walked up the hill there was nothing to offer them serious opposition, and they were in Ladysmith but it is one of the precepts of that great people that it is necessary to bombard the position they intend to assault for at least a day before the actual attempt, which always gave a mobile force like the Boers an opportunity to strengthen their position sufficiently, to make an attack, if successful, at least hazardous. This day the Republican force available, by shooting at every man who attempted to reconnoitre their position, must have conveyed to the English officers, the impression that the hills were strongly held. That night a Vicker's maxim arrived with about 400 recruits. They also brought ammunition, food and shovels and the latter were plied diligently the entire night, the men not working, lying awake on the alert for an attack, but no advance was made and in the morning the British had lost their best chance of getting to Ladysmith via Trickhard's Drift.

For the succeeding four days, determined attempts were made with progressive trenches to force the Federal positions on the west, but without success, every rush ending in failure with loss to the storming party. The first night

500 men could have chosen their own point for taking possession, but after the reinforcements arrived and adequate defenses were made for the guns and men, this opportunity was lost. In two days after the first crossing, the Boers had two Creusot field guns, one Krupp, and two Vicker's maxims, on the field, which were splendidly served under tremendous difficulties until the climax of the twenty-fourth.

On the nineteenth, there was an attempt of an extended cavalry flanking movement by the west, through Acton Holmes. 3,000 men and a battery, under command of General Dundonald, started, and immediately came in contact with a hundred Republicans who rode *en masse* into them unawares, and only escaped by a dash that left seven dead and twenty prisoners in the hands of the British. This was great carelessness, that they had no foreguard and the commandant was severely censured by his own men. A force was organized to follow and stop the expedition with success, and the ownership of the British battery was for some time in question, but its fate was solved by the enemy falling back on their main column, which caused General Warren, in command, to report that on account of supplies, a flanking movement was impracticable and he considered the direct route the easiest.

Spion's Kop, a broken hill several hundred feet higher than the rest of the range, and within 2,000 yards of the road which the English desired to follow, had been undefended up to the twenty-third. The Republicans considered that its inaccessibility for artillery from the south would protect it from assault, but with increased forces a picket was entrusted with its defense. This picket of forty men of all commandos, having partly built their trench on the brow of the hill, were resting in the early part of the night from their labors, with no idea of an

attack. The drizzly mist enveloped everything and they crouched in the new-formed defense trying to gain shelter from the damp. Occasionally one would step out to return with a large stone to complete some part of the wall, with which he was not satisfied. With their usual carelessness, as all men were awake, there was no advance guard, and as the Boers were moving around in search of suitable rocks for construction, no attention was paid to shadows that moved temporarily in the mist, and passed to the right or to the left, until one happened to strike directly on the trench, stepped on the shoveled dirt, raised a pair of field glasses to his eyes and demanded of the man a few feet behind him, in accents more often heard on Piccadilly than in South Africa, "Aw, where are the Boah's?"

It came as a shock to the men cowering in the excavation at his feet, expecting and fearing nothing but the damp, and six or seven rifles were immediately discharged against the breast of the interrogator, who was sky-lined in the scant light above them.

On the discharge of the rifles they quickly found they were practically surrounded. The undefined forms they had noticed passing them, were British soldiers on the same quest as the unfortunate who had succeeded in discovering the Boers. They now commenced to converge from every direction, and officers were heard to order their men not to shoot; the picket realized the danger and prepared to escape by running in the dark among the enemy. The darkness and the direction from which they came, puzzled the British and protected them long enough for them to get beyond the vicious jabs that were sent after them, when Tommy found he had nearly been run over by a hated Boer. One American of the picket, fleeing with the rest, after discharging his gun at the in-

quisitive officer, got between two English soldiers; giving one a push, he was fired at by the other but missed, with considerable danger to his companion. Tommy then swung with his bayonet, but our friend striking about the knees an unseen rock, pitched six feet down a declivity, the bayonet just opening the back of his neck as he fell, shooting following him in the dark, at random. The American found himself in a hole, and as he rustled in his recovery, the soldiers attempted to feel him with their bayonets. Regaining his feet and extricating himself he again commenced to run, when the next thing he struck in the blackness was a larger rock about waist high. The force of his momentum turned him a complete somersault over the rock. He fell on the other side, as he momentarily imagined, a hundred feet, but gathering himself together unhurt, he found he was ten feet down the hill on the north side and in safety.

The sound of the loose rocks rolling around him and scrambling heard, denoted that several of his comrades had also arrived thus far in safety, and on a reunion where they had left their horses at the foot of the hill (the natural Boer meeting ground in danger) the entire picket was found to have lost but one member, the rest having no further injuries than a few minor bayonet wounds. They could hear the British cheering on the top of the hill with cries of "Hurrah for Majuba!" and "Majuba avenged!" the same cries reaching the other Federal positions, and filling the occupants with alarm and doubt as to the extent of the disaster, their own predicament being serious if the British maintained their position.

But the enemy was satisfied to make no further active demonstration during the night, their almost bloodless victory being the incident which formed the foundation

for the despatches which declared Ladysmith relieved, and caused England to celebrate that event as an acknowledged fact. Ladysmith, signaled by rockets of the success, answered by the same brilliant illuminations, which must have carried some significance to those who could read the meaning of the many colored lights, and appeared a most ominous foreboding to the Boers as their trenches were lighted by the various hues.

Part of the picket stayed at the foot of the hill to watch any further advance, and others scattered to inform the various commandos of the extent of the disaster and the necessity of reinforcements to take the hill. Hendrik Kay, one of their number, although wounded in the arm, mounted his horse to inform General B——— of what had occurred. On delivering his message the general in a horrified manner said, "What! The English have Spion's Kop!" and without a word of explanation ordered his horse and disappeared, to rejoin his command only after the hill had been retaken. Kay, not seeing any satisfaction in this, hunted up Louis Botha, who immediately sent out an urgent call for volunteers and artillery, with the message that "Spion's Kop must be retaken that day."

Before daylight a picked force of all commands received orders to proceed up the hill under cover of darkness, and to get as close to the British trenches as possible and there find cover. This was done. Crawling stealthily through the rocks they got within eighty yards of the enemy before they were challenged by a volley. Every man nestled close to the earth, and as silently as possible piled rocks for his protection. Every few minutes a rock carelessly placed would slip and make a noise, when, at the first sound, all went to the ground, as it was invariably answered by the whe-e-e of the bullets, accompanied by

A Corner of Spion's Kop

the blaze of the discharge all along the British line. So they worked these early morning hours, with no event but an occasional sound impossible to avoid, and the certain answer, the sudden illumination and the spontaneous rattle of musketry, with the clip of the striking bullets. The noise of the rock was warning sufficient, and before the rifles spoke, all were hugging their shelter, waiting until the stillness permitted them to resume their labors.

The morning dragged on and daylight at last came, but the mist hung so close to the ground, nothing was visible over ten feet. The force lay and waited for what the South African knew to be the certain consequence of the heat of the sun, the lifting of the mist. Hoarse orders were heard, "Company C to the right, E Company Lancasters to the centre, Thornycrofts form companies!" Yes, the enemy was yet there but nothing was visible.

About seven o'clock a slight breeze arose. In a few seconds there was not a sign of the mist except the dew on the grass; the two forces saw each other within eighty yards, and a roar of musketry immediately broke forth. The Boers taking advantage of the ledge of the hill now displayed to them for the first time, began to deploy, utilizing every rock in forcing the enemy's wings, until they had completed a semicircle around the north side of the battle field. Nor was the centre idle, working its way rock by rock until the firing lines were within a few feet, dealing death at so close a range that looking along the rifle, you distinguish the color of the eyes you desired to close with a bullet.

With few casualties to the storming party, the British, by reason of their density, were losing heavily from the start. They were packed so closely in the insufficient defenses that they could not all secure cover, and faced

by men that seldom missed at 500 yards, their fate was foredoomed.

Barend Badenhorst, veldkornet of Vryheid, many times a hero was shot by a bullet directly between the eyes. Refusing to take sufficient cover, he had stood behind a rock to shoot when he was struck. Swinging on his heel he sank with a groan in a sitting posture, his back supported by the rock he so lately fired over. Hour after hour he sat with wide open eyes. His death certain, no one moved him. Here was—a panorama of the operations of the last few months. Ladysmith, the town costing so much, backed by the Drakensburg range lay below and before this dying warrior. Men with spare ammunition hurrying past would give this well-known man a glance of pity as he sat with open eyes, and angry wound, on the crest of the hill he had given his life to repossess. The noise of the battle and the passing men had no apparent effect on the deadened brain or staring gaze, but sitting erect until noon, suddenly, with a gutteral ske-e-e-t (shoot) a stream of blood poured from the hole in his forehead and the bravest man we ever knew sank dead and limp to the earth.

Slowly the first and second defenses were won, and the trenches having been built in progressive order, the English were falling back on the relays as they retreated up the slope of Spion's Kop. Still the daring Federals kept encroaching on their flanks. Panicstricken a British company would dash to a trench in the rear, losing many in attaining this temporary shelter, soon to find that the certain wings, as arms, had again secured an enfilading power on their new position. These flankers were not many, but they sent no bullets through the air on a singing mission. Every ring of a Mauser had an answering splud, as it echoed, its deadly mission fulfilled, and this

certain and unavoidable death was sapping their courage. Small detachments would attempt, with a bayonet charge, to dislodge these sharp-shooters, and, temporarily they withdrew this deadly fire from the trenches to themselves. None succeeded, the respite was only momentary, long enough to ring the changes of the storming party when the certain allotment would again commence among the battalions in the trenches. Malherbe, Botha, De Roos, leaders of these daring few, died only to be replaced by others as eager. The fire never ceased, all knew that the day was not yet won, that men's work was yet to be done. Solomon Grobler of Vryheid, the remaining veldkornet, shot through the hand, led and cheered the Vryheid command into every new advantage. The English were becoming demoralized at this certain death, from this relentless and tireless pressure. They saw no appeal. The mass of men were being driven foot by foot, by the few, every rifle rang death to one; a despairing charge would be made to regain a lost trench, and by common instinct every Republican rifle sought and stayed it, then returned to dealing death to the rank and file, now huddling in fear in the limited and overpacked trenches. Officers charged wildly about among the British, preaching courage by word and example, to be followed by the hail of lead that stilled the voice. The holocaust could not be stopped and they were forced to take possession of the last trench, the one from which the Republican picket had been forced the previous night, and necessarily built for a defense from the north side, and offering the scantiest cover against assault from that direction.

Several hundred Englishmen found no refuge behind this slight excavation, and retreated to a cull or basin in the rear, with the Federals now above them, able with their positions on the rim, to shoot down and into this

mass of humanity paralyzed with the apparently inevitable doom of annihilation. Here the scene was too awful and every shot, though fired, while "seeing red," seemed a murder, to those not habitually lustful of blood. The fire-swept incline behind these troops ended in a bluff forty feet high, and the huddled men, incapable of further action, still held by inherent discipline, were dropping fast, without any attempt to reply to the stream of death poured into their midst.

The British that had secured a position in the trench, still kept up a reply to the Republicans, ensuring the certain death of their less fortunate comrades, who were completely exposed, and upon whom all the rifles not engaged with these sharp-shooters were turned. The end was in sight. Getting beyond human endurance, and during a temporary cessation of fire from the British, which misled the Republicans, handkerchiefs of every degree of white were raised in the formation behind the trenches, until fully forty fluttered in token of surrender. With a cheer and a sigh of relief, as a welcome change from this revolting butchery, forty Boers left their cover and ran toward them, intending to assist in disarming their supposed prisoners. When they were well in the open, a red-faced, excited officer, said to be Colonel Thornycroft, of Thornycroft's Horse, ran forward from the cover of the trench and screaming in choler that there was no surrender, he ordered his men in the defenses to fire.

As the small band of Republicans were now exposed, and within a few yards of the muzzles of the enemy's rifles there was no escape, and eleven died from the volley. Having fought gallantly all day until they considered the day won, they gave their life for their no-

British Trench and Spion's Kop

bility, which had too hurriedly welcomed the cessation of the unnecessary slaughter. Among the eleven killed here was Schmidt-Dumont, of the German commando, who had distinguished himself by his bravery in the assault, and also Herr Von Brusewitz, an ex-officer of the German army who had also conducted himself with great courage. The latter had become notorious the world over, about the year 1891, by the murder of a civilian in a café at Carlsruhe, in Baden, the word Brusewitzing being now used in Germany as a term applying to any abuse of a citizen by the military. There was a rumor that he had sought the death he found on the top of Spion's Kop in many climes since this incident. Whatever his past fault, he atoned this day, showing no evidence of cowardice then, but died as a brave man should, defending a just cause with his face to the foe.

After this unhappy incident, the Federals that escaped, retreated to cover, using a trench the British had evacuated, and without mercy the carnage was resumed. Other individual attempts were made to use a white flag but obtained no recognition, the hail of lead being relentlessly poured into their midst until the British had been forced out of their last trench, when, with terror they threw themselves over any part of the bluff they encountered in their dash for safety. Shortly before the surrender, a number of soldiers who had been displaying evidences of distress and anxiety to submit by waving handkerchiefs, raising both hands up, and reversing their rifles while elevated, were beckoned to by members of our force to come over, and a veldkornet shouted to them to do so. As many rose up preparatory to complying, the peremptory voice of an officer could be distinctly heard to order "Down, down!" and as about thirty dropped their

guns and rushed out toward us, the order "Fire!" followed, and about eight of the men fell, shot from behind. The remainder gained our trenches in safety.

When the enemy's fire had ceased, the Republicans again advanced and disarmed 280 Britishers, which still remained on the field. For pity's sake their life was spared them, after their own countrymen had legitimately signed their death warrant, but the Federals welcomed the cessation of firing as an opportunity for them to again take chances of treachery, if thereby they could put a stop to the ghastly slaughter. There was no further resistance and the most daring assault in history had been successfully accomplished.

General Louis Botha's orders that "the hill must be retaken that day," had been made an accomplished fact, by himself and 450 men of mixed commands, who represented every district and foreign corps in the field, but to Louis Botha, and the representatives of the Carolina, Pretoria, Vryheid commandos and the German corps, every burgher concedes the first places in the honors of the day.

Despatch riders, sent by General Botha, when the first successful assault on the hill became known, had brought some spare guns from Colenso, thirty miles distant, which arrived before the battle started, and by mounting them on the hills on each side of Spion's Kop, to guard the approaches from the south side, although swept by the superior number and calibre of the British guns, again directed by the balloon, they had been so handled as to prevent any attempt of the 27,000 British troops on the river, from reinforcing their countrymen on the hill, thereby making it possible for the small force under Louis Botha to complete the victory.

The British lost 1,800 men in killed, wounded and miss-

ing, among whom were General Woodgate and many distinguished officers. The greater number fell victims to the force of 450 who did the actual storming of the hill. At the foot of the bluff in the rear of the last position were many torn and mangled forms which had dared death in this manner in preference to remaining on the summit, fearing to throw themselves on the mercy of the men, they had outraged by the only means of mercy in warfare.

The British gave various excuses for this disaster to their troops, scarcity of water, failure of reinforcements, and incompetence of officers being the most prominent, everything but the manly one that while holding the superior positions and having the advantage of men and artillery, they were fairly whipped by better strategy, and superior marksmanship of an inferior force. Upon the evacuation of the hill they immediately commenced their retreat across the river, to a camp on the south bank, the Republican Creusot field gun keeping up during daylight, a constant fire on their pontoon bridge, making the passage both hazardous and disorderly. Their rear was still protected by their artillery, and the naval guns on the Boshrand, five miles down the river, but it is probable that if the Republicans had attempted to follow them they would have added, if not guns, many wagons to the glories of the day, as the retreat was most irregular. The Boers, never bloodthirsty, considered the distressing sight on the battle field and the experiences endured as sufficient offering to be poured out in any cause in the allotted time, and contented themselves with thanksgiving services to the glory of the God which had permitted them this victory.

The artillery fire from the British naval guns on the Boshrand now became so concentrated on the battle field,

that beyond the removal at night of the Boer dead, it was impossible to do anything with the dead English demanding attention.

General Botha sent a despatch to the British that they would be permitted to bury their countrymen if they would send burial companies to do the duty, and to identify the rapidly decomposing corpses. The answer from General Buller was that the Republicans could bury them, and when they sent in the bill of costs the English general would pay it. It is not difficult to surmise that such a message to a people naturally independent, should be regarded as a gratuitous insult, and if it was possible of any other interpretation, for instance a wish for the appearance of the scene of carnage to be unknown in the British rank and file already discouraged, then it could have been worded differently, and in a courteous manner, to have at least hidden the chagrin the general felt at his defeat, administered by a few men of the race they pretended to despise. A man would have to be severely warped by military association and effect of a servile following, before he could write such a letter with any doubt of its reception. Finally on General Botha refusing to ask his volunteers to do a loathsome task for the British, they had the grace to cease firing on the field for twenty-four hours and allow one of their own burial parties to partly cover the remains of their comrades. It is quite in the range of possibility that if the Republicans, out of humanity had consented to do the task, General Buller would have taken a pleasure in forwarding to each Boer that had been engaged, the twenty-five cents the British think a fair equivalent for a day's work.

A few days later when a party of visitors from America including the Hon. Webster Davis, were on the battle field, the dead which had been dragged in the trenches

First British Defence After the Battle of Spion's Kop

and sprinkled with loose dirt were protruding in a disgusting manner, many more entirely neglected, lying where they had fallen, and being unidentified would naturally be broadly returned on the list of missing. The ghastly state and stench precluded the Republicans from putting the hill in a state of defense as the burghers refused to do duty upon it, but needless to say the British never again threatened it.

Chapter X

British trek east—Poisoned bullets—Pont Drift—Alec Brand —Night scenes—Artillery practice—Cleanliness—Anecdotes— Hlangwana Hill—British cross the Tugela—Pieters Hill—Piet Geldenhuis—Red Cross intilligence men—The flight—Long Tom again.

AS the British transport was again moving east, a patrol was left on guard, the Federals following the course of the enemy on the north bank. Their naval guns still remained opposite Pont Drift, but they made no further demonstration, therefore a guard was also left to watch this crossing, the remainder of the participants in the late engagements separated to rejoin their various laagers at Colenso and around Ladysmith.

From among the pernicious statements in the English press, the Boers learnt at this time, they were using poisoned bullets. We had become used to the assertion that we were poisoning the wells and rivers with cyanide of potassium obtained from the mines, and it is needless to say this latter accusation was equally baseless and cowardly in its effort to malign an honorable foe. The Mauser cartridges supplied before the war were known among the Dutch as the short Nek and the long Nek. In other words they were bottle-shaped and the distance between the primer and the part shrunk to the calibre of the bullet was not the same.

The short Nek was in the greatest quantity and unfortunately it was too short to correctly fill the chamber of the rifle, the vacuum created causing a great recoil and sometimes bursting the barrel at the breech. From their proportion in the quantity of ammunition available, these shells had to be used, so in reloading them the gov-

ernment advisers conceived the idea of giving the bullet and cartridge a heavy coating of grease, which rolling up as the cartridge was forced home, filled the empty space in the chamber and killed the recoil. It is unnecessary to repeat that this grease was quite harmless, but its color being greenish it was seized upon as an illustration of the barbarity of the most humane fighters in the world. The English soldiers and doctors knew from experience its true character, but no event in this war has been too trivial for the press of this great nation to misrepresent in its effort to prejudice the civilized powers against their opponents, hoping to turn the searchlights of truth away from the true issue.

The Republicans had scarcely left Pont Drift when the British again became demonstrative, and the volunteers were hurriedly summoned to reinforce the positions. The balloon had begun to be regarded by the Boers as almost as sure a sign of a meditated British attack, as a bombardment, and this ill-omened war bird could now be seen hovering on the south bank of the river.

Val Krantz, a small hill on the north of the river from Pont Drift, was completely surmounted by a semicircle of rough, broken hills, that made it strategically of no importance to either combatant. The Republicans formed the mistake of defending it, the British the mistake of taking it by assault and attempting to hold it. On the day the British crossed the river and attacked, forty of the Johannesburghers were in the position, and after a short defense found themselves surrounded. They fought most gallantly until but few remained, when these made a break to escape to the Boer lines. Eight succeeded, thirty-two losing their lives in the sharp defense. Among those that escaped were J. N. King and Paddy Richardson, two Americans who had attained a

reputation for reckless bravery throughout the Republican army. The Americans who died are worthy of mention, having served their adopted cause with great courage and won the hearts of the people for whom they gave their lives. Paddy Fahey, Mat Brennan, Oscar Maximitz and Jim Tully are the four who should be remembered of this American clique. Fahey, when he saw his three comrades and countrymen killed, refused to attempt to escape with the few, but hurled lead and abuse at the storming British, until, riddled with bullets, the bayonets stilled him forever.

Alec Brand of the same party, son of a president of the Orange Free State, wounded in three places, fell between the lines in the last dash for liberty. He lay for two days in great agony, his wounds open, and crazed with the plague of flies from which he was unable to protect himself. A bullet in the hip forbade him to crawl, and with a hail of death constantly passing over him, burnt by the sun at day and chilled by the bitter cold nights he prayed the British, close to whose defenses he lay, for aid and food, but received nothing but curses on his nationality. His cries were audible to both forces and the second night J. N. King, the American scout, crawled with a Boer comrade to the British line. Under a tremendous fusillade from both sides, caused by the impression that the rocks unavoidably displaced in their passage denoted a storm from the enemy, these two heroes brought Brand to medical comfort and his people, to recover and rejoin the fighting ranks within three months of his distressing experience.

The scenes at night during the time of this battle were most lurid. The Republicans holding the surrounding hills on the defense feared a night attack. There were no pickets on account of the storm of steel constantly

exchanged between the opposing trenches. Hence every defender lay on his gun in the positions, with a view of immediate resistance if there was an attack. A burgher, half asleep, seeing a shadow, or hearing a noise which alarmed him, would fire. His companions trusting in his judgment, or possibly sleepier than he, would join the fusillade, thence it would work around the semicircle like a slow match until the complete position was a rim belching sheets of fire. The British probably thinking the shooting was a night attack, would reply. Every position on both sides would then be denoted in the inky darkness by a blaze of light, forming one of the most impressive spectacles ever witnessed.

Thousands of rounds would be thus fired until confidence would be restored, then it would gradually cease, those more tenacious than the others dropping the last shots, dotted through space by a single streak of light and a single report, to eventually die to complete silence and darkness, only for the entire sound and scene to recommence and be repeated at the first foreign noise. At other times the British in Ladysmith, and those south of the river would illuminate the skies with all colored rockets telling stories the purport of which we could only surmise, but if it was a promise of a speedy relief they were to be disappointed, for on the third day the Republican artillery arrived, and aided by a Vicker's maxim they quickly made the British position on the north bank untenable. Without warning they re-crossed the river in the night, destroying their pontoon bridges, and the Republicans, on opening fire in the morning, found their positions undefended. Upon occupation we saw the graves of their hastily buried dead, and our enemy could then be seen trekking toward Chieveley. A few scouts crossing the river reported it possible to cut off a portion

of their transport, but no effort was made to put the suggestion into effect: leaving guards to watch unexpected developments on the upper Tugela the commando returned to their former stations to pick up the old life, and await new events. Commandant Ben Viljoen of the Johannesburg commando shocked by the tremendous proportionate loss in his force, broke down in mind and body and returned to Johannesburg to recuperate. There was some possibility of the Republic losing the services of this brave soldier, and there was a feeling of relief in the army among the burghers when he returned to the front, completely recovered and filled with his former zeal.

The artillery duel, or the daily bombardment, were now trifles we should have been disappointed to miss, and the practice of the naval guns and the merits of the gunners, were discussed with what news we could obtain of the doings in the Free State. The contending searchlights afforded entertainment at nights, crawling over every point and the efforts of the British to locate and destroy the Republican lights, with their heavy guns, would make life interesting to those who, after dark, had made their beds to sleep outside of the trenches.

The Boer pickets on the open river bank was another feature not wholly devoid of danger. The enemy's light would creep along the bank silhouetting every blade of grass, and the pickets blinked at the strong light and wondered if it was thrown to enable sharpshooters lying in its shadows to obtain a shot at their exposed persons, or an alligator wallowing in the shallow water and sand, or breaking reeds on the opposite bank would call the guard to repel an imaginary launching of pontoons.

The Republican trench, running continuously across the flat, between the Colenso hills and Grobler's Kloof,

for months had been undergoing a daily bombardment. The defenders scattered on the level stretches behind the trench, indulging in games of leapfrog, football, running, jumping, or any exercise to break the monotony and furnish exercise for persons of healthy mind and body. An outlook always on duty, would see the flash of one of the English naval guns on Chieveley Hill, and give warning. Constant familiarity had taught them they had thirty-five seconds to get cover, from the time the flash was seen until the missile reached its destination, and the dash to the trench was often done in very creditable time for amateur athletes. The shell would pass with a vicious scream, striking the playground which immediately became alive again with these boyish men, resuming their games at the point where they had been interrupted, only to once more flee at another warning flash and the cry of "I spy!" or "Slaat Blitz!" (lightning-struck) from the sentinel. Sometimes the shell would fail to burst, when many volunteers craving exercise would man shovels to excavate it, the lyddite being dug out with sticks and the case shipped to relatives at home, as a souvenir of Colenso amenities. The British, with the aid of their glasses, became cognizant of this trait of curiosity, and cured it by attaching a minute and a half time-fuse to the shell. The first of these shells sank into the ground, apparently lifeless, to be immediately surrounded by shovelers. In a short period when the work of excavation was well under way, it exploded, fortunately without injury to the burghers. From then on, unexploding shells were allowed sufficient time to cool in their resting place, before any effort at investigation was made.

Something was evidently wrong in the uniformity of the explosive used in discharging the projectile of these guns. Their artillery never succeeded in the feat of hit-

ting the same place twice. This trench, a mile in length, on a slope towards the guns, was only struck twice in three months of daily bombardment. At first it filled all with dread when they would follow a line with consecutive shells, gradually decreasing the distance between the explosion and the trench, but experience taught us that if they succeeded in getting the exact range with a scratch shot, although they knew where it struck, the next shell was invariably wild.

The first of the two effectual shots in the three months, although striking the trench, injured nothing but a live chicken that a provident burgher was preserving for dinner. The second struck the sand-bags and exploded over the trench. A burgher lying on his back at the bottom, received the full force of the explosion, and was literally reduced to a pulp or crushed flat without the skin being in any way injured. Two others were badly torn by dirt but recovered, this being the extent of the casualties produced by the tons of metal thrown at this position during this period.

It must have been annoying to the English artillery officers to in no way be able to stop for a longer period than that taken by the passage of their missiles, the games and sky-larking among these fun-loving people, who seldom, under forty years of age, seemed to lose pleasure in the exercise or horse-play so characteristic of freedom, health and morality. Among the many names the English have applied to these people, probably the most frequent has been "the dirty Boers." The dividing river, the Tugela was crowded in the favorite bathing pools, from daylight to dark by many of the Dutchmen, who spent part of every day in this delightful pastime, ignoring the shell fire they invariably drew on themselves by the practice, they continued to disport, daring

both shells and alligators. Seldom have we seen on the most arduous marches, an opportunity of bath or wash neglected, and their clothing was invariably sweet, in pleasing contrast to their vermin-infested traducers, so constantly handled as prisoners.

There are times when even the grim arbitrament of war has its prerogative terrors encroached upon, and with the very large number of Boer youths in their teens, numberless humorous incidents occurred during the siege of Ladysmith. Not a few were furnished by Piet and Jan, two Boer boys of fourteen and fifteen, respectively, always to be found around the *Hoofd* (head) laager, or the artillery quarters near by. Who has ever been around Ladysmith during this eventful siege, that did not know or hear of Piet, Jan or "Klein" Buller. Piet and Jan were both boys from the Pretoria district, and general favorites in the various camps. At the battle of Modderspruit, a small mountain gun, painted khaki color, (a seven-pounder), was captured from the enemy, but there being no ammunition, it was thrown aside. When the two boys arrived, the little gun, lying on its side, neglected, and almost covered with mud, was at once adopted by them and christened "Klein" Buller. They had no ammunition, as there was none to fit the gun, but that did not prevent these young geniuses from beginning active practice with it. Looting the artillery stores of a number of six-pound shell already captured, powder and fuse, and dragging away an old tent during the night from one of the camps, it soon became known that the besieging force had been reinforced by an additional gun. For the first week all sorts of attempts were made to work this gun, frequently almost resulting in loss of life; sometimes by an overcharge the gun would jump over on its back, and fire the shell in the air when there would

be a general scramble for cover. Then the shot would roll out, as it were, and drop in amongst our own pickets, resulting in the air being filled with threats of dire consequences, and not seldom it struck just a few feet in front, producing a general stampede on explosion. But Jan and Piet finally got it to work, and with a couple of oxen dragged it to the top of Pepworth Hill facing an English fort, and there until a relieving force entered the town, operated it with considerable accuracy. This was done by lashing the projectile tightly with strips of canvas, until it could only be made to fit the gun by being driven in with a heavy pole, then powder was filled in behind and an improvised fuse applied. The boys built a breastwork to protect themselves, and in the emplacement provided for the weapon, four posts were planted, to which the gun was bound with raw-hide thongs. During the evening as many as twenty shells would be provided for the following day, and with dawn, Piet and Jan commenced their bombardment of the fort, a distance of over three thousand yards, hurling shell after shell into it. There were rare occasions when they missed their mark, and if one or the other failed to make a hit, he would be terribly chaffed by the more fortunate. Jan would have his shot while Piet watched the result and vice versa, but one of the important duties of the boy on guard was to give warning of the flash of the responding British cannon. For sighting the gun it was lifted and wedged by stones at such an angle that they ran no danger of competition. They would beg, borrow or steal canvas, powder or shells, and their bombardment went on uninterrupted, while many marveled what became of this or that tent, canvas horse-trough, or bag of powder, et cetera. "Pas op, Piet!" (Look out, Piet) and a dash was made for the *schanze,* until the screaming British

KAFFIR WOMEN OF THE TRANSVAAL.

shell had passed and spent its force by explosion, or "raak" (bull's-eye) as one of the partners would shout, indicating that the shot the other had fired found its billet. It was not infrequent that a powder charge exploded prematurely, blackening their faces and hands, and causing general dismay to the interested spectators, but these fine specimens of budding warriors did not mind such small trifles, continuing to find amusement for their companions until the siege was raised.

In the middle of February, General Buller began to show renewed activity, and made a demonstration against Hlangwana Hill, showing that he at last realized that this was the true key to all operations conducted on the Tugela at Colenso. On the thirteenth, the Krugersdorp command, having had notice that they would be relieved from the defense of this post, withdrew in the careless manner of the Federals, without awaiting the new garrison. Commandant Buys of the Heidelberg command, whose duty it was to take charge, crossed the river, but failed to go into the position that night. This fact became known to the British, who, without opposition occupied the hill on the morning of the fourteenth, which necessitated the supporting Republicans to the west, entrenched on the north bank in the Colenso hills, to fall back on the foothills, leaving the passage of the Tugela practically uncontested. Only a small force of Swazieland Police, stayed to harass the advance guard of engineers, until compelled to retreat by number.

The abandonment of these positions had been so unexpected that the searchlight was lost, and owing to the limited supply of dynamite available, the railroad bridges were left intact. Having crossed their guns and camps, the British took up positions in the hills lately occupied by the Boers, being given an opportunity of seeing and

judging the entrenchments, that had permitted the burghers to cook, eat and sleep in safety during the three months' bombardment they had undergone. Then they attacked Grobler's Kloof on the extreme west of the Republican lines, and on the main road to Ladysmith, but failing to force a passage, they retreated with their artillery across the river and confined their attention to the extreme right where the Federals still retained Monte Christo Hill, and Asvogel Kop, on the south bank of the river. These hills now underwent a terrific bombardment with occasional assaults which failed to shake the Republican hold.

On the night of the seventeenth, for some unknown reason, and without giving notice, the Middleburg and Standerton commandos, who had been entrusted with the defense of these positions, took panic, forsook their horses and retreated across the river, leaving the hills entirely unprotected. Louis Botha attempted to stem this flight, but they were beyond control, the Standerton men never stopping until they were north of the Klip river, abreast of Ladysmith, and sixteen miles from the deserted trenches.

Other commandos were exhorted to defend the abandoned hills, but with the obstinacy of the race, refused, not through fear, but on account of the manner in which their countrymen had acted. Early next morning a party crossed the river, to save the horses that had been left to their fate, and the reconnoitre developed the extraordinary fact that the British were also retreating. Monte Christo, Asvogel, and even Hlangwana, were scouted and scaled without meeting a single Britisher. Two armies were retreating from each other. The Boers had abandoned the former hills and retreated across the river, and the British had abandoned Hlangwana moun-

tain and the assault of the other positions and were now in retreat towards Chieveley. Hurried word was sent to the Federal generals, but they were unable to convince the burghers of the true situation, who refused to cross the river again and retake their position. From some source of treachery, probably flash or flag signals, the British became possessed of the knowledge of the true state of affairs. It was certainly not through their scouts, for not a scout came near the hill where the few Boers awaited in hope for assistance. Whatever the source, organized discipline succeeded where the opposite failed and they returned at eleven o'clock, drove the scouts from Hlangwana and commenced bombarding Asvogel, under cover of which they charged the hill, to find no one whatever to defend it.

Some of us watched the event from the next rise and listened to the elated shouts of the surprised Britishers, who, from the cries had again avenged Majuba. The "Hurrah for Majuba" and "Majuba avenged!" had apparently become a battle cry, to be used at every bloodless victory of the campaign. Hurrying down to the river with our spoils of forty horses and saddles, one of our companions, Tage Andersen, was drowned in the crossing, under the rifle fire of the enemy, who quickly swarmed over the hills intervening, between the scene of the late victory and the river bank.

The bridge built by the Republicans at the base of Pieters Hill was made of Karree wood railroad ties, bound by rails, and its destruction was entrusted to Captain Richardi of the Italian corps. His failure to effectually do this threw open the opportunity for crossing the Tugela, when the building of a pontoon would have been most difficult and hazardous, which free passage made it possible for them to make their attack on Pieters Hill,

which culminated in the relief of Ladysmith. The Republicans, being unable to contest the crossing, the enemy quickly effected a lodgement on the north bank, the bridge furnishing them with speedy service in supplies and reinforcement, and the lines were again drawn with six hundred yards between the opposing forces.

From the twenty-second, to the twenty-fourth, the British made continual assaults on the Boer position, using every method to force their troops to fight, again turning their cannon on their own men, when they were repulsed, and mowing them down within sight of their enemies. But it availed them nothing, the Boers determinedly held the positions, their courage being sustained in this protracted battle by examples of individual bravery which would have won all manner of comment in an organized army.

The intervening space between the fighting lines was an open flat with the railroad on the east side, running parallel and within twenty yards of the British position. The flat had been a Boer camp and was covered with a débris of provisions, the supply of which from the laagers had commenced to fail, and daring attempts were made with success to exploit these abandoned supplies until they too became exhausted. Then there still remained a box-car of bread which stood alone on the track under the barrels of the British rifles. The first man that tapped this food mine, was seriously wounded in the delay of opening the door, afterward dying of his wound, but that did not deter others from making the two hundred yards' dash across the open necessary to gain the car, fill a sack with bread and return, the holes in the bread testifying how close he had been to the real thing.

There was an old man named Piet Geldenhuis, about sixty years of age, who used to advance before daylight

to a slight dip, under cover of which he would lie the entire day, making the service of the British maxim within forty yards of his cover a most costly arm of the offense. His two sons, well-educated youths of about sixteen and eighteen would accompany him, the three spending the day under a broiling sun, harassing everything living that exposed itself. Retreat was impossible, as the father was old and slow, and the sons would not have left him, so they had to advance and retire under cover of night, with certain death or capture if discovered. The deliberation and devotion of this feat made even the bravest Boers envious.

One of the scenes at night was the thousands of tiny fires which composed the British camp. The soldiers carried their own rations, each having a separate fire for cooking purposes, and the effect in the wild, rugged mountains was most picturesque, so many lights, as stars, dotted in the darkness.

On the twenty-fourth an armistice was granted to the British to bury their dead, the troops retreating across the river. Rendered possible by the lack of discipline, the burghers freely intermingled with the Red Cross bearers, who were permitted to come within the trenches, thereby obtaining information invaluable to their side, as regarding the small numbers of the defending force and their distribution. Though again and again proven that the British Red Cross combined their mission of mercy with the duties of officers of the Intelligence department, the Boers saw nothing sinister in permitting a uniformed Britisher with a Red Cross on his arm, to take observations from the Federal trenches with the field glass they carried to discover their dead, nor yet in the interrogations which they were permitted to make to the loquacious of these simple people, somewhat proud

of their ability to speak a little English, and their prowess, from the point of numbers, in repelling an attack. They could not realize that all such bravado was stored to return and be visited on themselves and their comrades.

With the information gathered the British recrossed the river on the twenty-fifth, attacking a position previously unassailed, which was defended by only twenty-five men, having a defensive area of only sixty yards, after the stormers turned the crest of the hill. Although repulsed for two days' continuous attack, on the twenty-seventh they succeeded in forcing a foothold, and with an enfilading fire they swept the top of the hill, forcing the Krugersdorpers to evacuate the key defense. This fierce but despairing defense cost the gallant Krugersdorpers the lives of many of the most noted fighters of the war, among them being the adored acting commandant Lonnie Beyers who was carried dying from the trenches, also De la Rey, of Dundee fame, and Paddy Richardson the fearless American. In the nineteen others which made up the sum total of the fallen, were two sisters attired in men's clothes, said to be Mrs. Van der Merve and Miss Marais, since missing, who refused to desert their male relatives. Three days before Commandant Potgeiter of the same commando was severely wounded and Beyers had succeeded him. On the same day Commandant Derksen of Boksberg was likewise badly wounded, and twenty minutes after his retirement, his successor was also killed, depriving that body for some time of a leader.

The Republicans tenaciously held the position on both sides of the captured trench, and urgent messages were sent to the generals by these old warriors, who saw nothing lost that could not be retaken. Although Lukas

Meyer was within a mile, with four hundred of the Standerton commando, the news of Cronje's surrender and General Joubert's weakness had paralyzed their offensive ambitions, and no attempt was made to reinforce the overtired defenders, who awaited patiently, holding their ground until the last of the messengers returned with the information that General Joubert had raised the siege of Ladysmith. This was the final blow. It isolated the few that were opposing Buller, and made their escape problematical. The weakest part of the Boer nature was touched, their retreat was threatened, and always filled with the dreaded prospect of banishment across the sea, they at last began to waver. Night came, and with the killed hope of reinforcements, nothing remained but to make the best retreat possible, confident that with any support the day was yet theirs. They reluctantly left the trenches they had clung to so tenaciously for seven days. Omitting the armistice, they had endured for that period, the constant assault and bombardment of a hundred guns. Now broken in spirit the exhausted few with bloodshot eyes and attenuated frames, staggered to the rear. Sick in mind and heart, disgusted with themselves for a sacrifice so costly and ineffectual, reproaching their comrades for weakness almost amounting to treachery, they made their way to their camps only to realize how completely they had been abandoned. Wagons and horses gone, they were hungry, worn and afoot, between two hostile armies. Staying their hunger with food thrown away in the deserted laagers, these wearied men threw themselves on their blankets and slept oblivious of all danger. With no further thought of the manner they would escape, they gave themselves up to the sweet consciousness of relaxation from the tremendous strain they had undergone during the past protracted battle.

Some of the less fatigued arose at daylight, and to enable themselves and companions to escape, went into the hills to round up the sick and disabled mules and horses, which had been left as useless. The circuit of Ladysmith now no longer controlled, had to be negotiated with the probability of an elated and inspired garrison attempting to wreak vengeance on the forces of those who had caused them so much suffering. The English swarming in the hills south of them, seeing the now collected mules and horses, and the large stand of empty tents, imagined the Republicans in force, and having learned caution, although the camp was in the open, they turned the maxims on the tents, which quickly aroused those that had been preparing food, and others were awakened for the first time from their deadened slumber, by the klip of the bullets through the canvas. All was instantly confusion, guns were hurriedly seized, and the first available quadruped that could stand on its feet was saddled and started down the road in pursuit of those who already had taken time by the forelock, and were on the Ladysmith road with the intention of making a circle around the east of the town. It was an amusing, though perilously slow race while they were under fire. Mules balked and horses gave down from some unnoticed ailment in the hurried selection. The more fortunate ones took their companions up behind them, the race lasting for six miles, and, in spite of the handicaps, they succeeded in making the Klip river, crossing ahead of the British right wing of cavalry.

Here were entrenched in the river bank the Boer stragglers who had determined to contest the crossing, until their steeds could recuperate and the dismounted burghers were able to scour the country for any old abandoned animal fit to ride. There was a tremendous

A Stone-wall Defence

bombardment toward Ladysmith and to our north, showing too plainly the garrison was conscious of the events that were transpiring. Toward the foot of Ontabagoni Hill we also heard a tremendous rattling of iron, mingled with shouts in all keys and several languages. This proved to be teamsters drawing the siege gun which had threatened Ladysmith so long from the south. It had been deserted by most of the Boers in the first panic, and the artillerymen had requested Colonel Blake, an American in command of the Irish brigade to assist them in an attempt to save it. Colonel Blake quickly responded, and collecting his corps around the gun, he helped to dismount it, then escorted it to the railroad at Elandslaagte, forming the rear guard of this extensive flight. When we arrived, the heavy gun had safely reached the foot of the hill nearly 400 feet in height, and it now lumbered past, drawn by thirty-six oxen. Much of the ammunition was abandoned, by reason of the draught animals having been stolen the night before, the burghers considering their personal effects of more value than the ammunition, the property of the government. They were unaccustomed to regard such supply of ammunition as a common possession, but wasted or abandoned it with a happy carelessness and confidence in the government being able to replace it.

The British still continued the bombardment, most of the shells falling in the late position of the gun. On inquiry from the artillerymen as to what force was drawing all this fire, the reply was "none." The slim Boer when he transhipped the gun to its traveling bearings on the carriage, had left standing the tripod used. The English seeing the tripod, imagined an attempt was being made to move the gun, and as long as the tripod remained standing, they considered it unaccomplished, and these

inoffensive pieces of pipe were the sole recipients of this tremendous cannonade.

Slowly the cannon crawled over the rough road. There was always a possibility of a sortie from the garrison, and to add to the downcast spirits of the hungry rear guard, it commenced to rain. That night the gun and its escort out-spanned abreast of Ladysmith, the oxen were too beaten to travel further. The scouts had informed us that General Dundonald with the left wing of the British cavalry had entered the town, and there was no further doubt that the garrison now knew we were in retreat. Hourly during the wet night we expected an attack, with the certain loss of the gun, but with daylight, nothing, happily, had disturbed us. The oxen were again yoked and they crawled with the gun past Ladysmith within sight of the British outposts. The bedraggled guard followed the laboring team, ready to forsake their charge at any display of force, and it looked as if only a miracle could save the gun, but the day passed without hostile demonstration, and Long Tom arrived in Elandslaagte, a point six miles north of Ladysmith at dark, where Generals Botha and Joubert were holding a small force to protect the rear of the transports. Joy at the safe arrival of the piece was freely expressed, Colonel Blake being highly commended for his conduct, and willing hands quickly ran the gun on a flat car. The tired escort had the satisfaction of seeing the train steam out of the station while they rummaged among the store-houses hunting crackers, tinned goods or anything appetizing among the abandoned supplies.

Chapter XI

The great trek—Kruger and Joubert—A day of humiliation and prayer — A commandant-general — Louis Botha — Revision — Leave of absence—Friction—Proclamations—Karree Siding —Sannah's Post—Captured correspondence—Reddersburg—Wepener—James Foster—Dutch leniency—Death of Villebois Muriel.

THE main column followed the railroad to Washbank, while part of the forces under Lukas Meyer, went toward Wessels Nek, where a scene of the wildest confusion reigned. Hundreds of canvas topped wagons converging to the narrow road, formed on the side of the hill a great solid triangle, two miles at the base and visible for miles. The recent rain had made the pass most difficult, every wagon having to be assisted over the steep incline with double teams. The clamor was fearful, each tried to be first, forcing their own vehicles into every crevice, in the hope of passing others, only to cause a more hopeless lock. The mounted men had carelessly gone before, seeking rest, regardless of this mass of wagons and field guns constituting the entire transport of the west wing, an inviting spoil for capture. Fortunately the British were busy holding celebrations and by the heroic labor of the teamsters, the tangle was worked clear in twenty-four hours. The last wagon made the passage safely the following night, without any threatening demonstration from the British.

The danger was passed, the entire army of the Tugela had made the perilous circuit of forty miles, without the loss of a gun or wagon not abandoned, and proceeding by slow stages, they commenced to recover their spirits. There was no recklessness or lawlessness, the English farmer and farm-houses were left unmolested. Even a

storehouse and hotel which had some British government stores, plainly billed to the Natal Carbineers, was passed unharmed, beyond the loss of a case of beer, which was irresistible to the first discoverers. The obvious falsehood of the British storekeeper that he had bought the supplies of the government was sufficient to secure their protection, and he was left unmolested with his own property intact, and that of the volunteer corps for which he had lied. The Boers slowly drifted toward the Biggarsburg range, where they entrenched themselves and recuperated, remaining inactive for six weeks.

President Kruger had arrived at Glencoe, to meet the generals and encourage the burghers to further resistance. In his address to the commandos, the old "Lion of Rustenburg," while exhorting the burghers to fresh deeds of valor, paid a high tribute to the lofty patriotism and former military renown of General Joubert, for whom he held a brotherly regard. But the keynote no one doubted and on conclusion all felt that the star of their faithful old general had set forever. The fact of his lifting the siege of Ladysmith and refusal to reinforce the weary defenders on the Tugela, whom he had practically left to their fate, was recalled, and the opinion was freely expressed among the burghers, that his recent exhibition of weakness and indecision had shown him irresponsible. The truth which had been painfully evident for months past, was at last acknowledged, but, alas, it was too late, the mischief was done, and Ladysmith which ought never to have been relieved, was lost to the Republics. As the result of a meeting of a Krygsraad, General Joubert retired to Pretoria, and at his own request, Louis Botha was appointed acting Commandant-General.

According to and in harmony with the devout character

THE LATE GENERAL PIET JOUBERT, AND SECRETARY

of these embattled farmers, the charges now having been disposed of, public prayer and humiliation was called for. Some of the commandants and recognized leaders in the churches of the district to which they belonged, eloquently reproached the burghers for waning faith in their God, and un-Christian pride in their early victories. The most lofty appeal was that of the Reverend Bosman, of Pretoria, which will never be forgotten by any of those who were present.

General Joubert had been suffering from injuries sustained by a fall from his horse, of so serious a nature as to have forbade him riding for some time, and with impaired health and mind, resulting from the magnitude of his task, added to the feebleness of his advanced years, he gladly returned to his home. His injuries proved fatal, for shortly after, complications set in, and, filled with grief for the cause of his people, he died on March 26, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, loved by all for his sterling qualities and past services. He had shown mental signs of his age for some years, but the glories he won for his people in the Boer-English war of '81, could no longer blind them to his inability or lack of force in '99. A younger and more progressive leader would have infused greater activity and achieved more, probably even reversing entirely the sad state of affairs at the time of his death. The office of Commandant-General had been elective and nothing could be more natural than that his patriotic and grateful countrymen should allow him, during active hostilities, to fill the office in preference to an untried, younger man. It was commonly known, nevertheless, that the old man's heart was never in this war. He had delayed the ordering and shipment of artillery bought in France, until it was lost to his country, and his was the only voice raised in the executive

council, advising the acceptance of the arbitrary dictatorial conditions that England sought to impose upon the Republics. With this knowledge, combined with the memory of his mistaken leniency in the pursuance of the present war, it is not surprising the burghers were resigned to the destiny that called him.

The Commandant-General, in times of peace, formed one of the executive council, his entire working force consisting of a commander, ten clerks and the artillery. He was responsible only to the president and first Volksraad, and had complete control of the artillery and the purchase of the munitions of war, subject only to the vote of the Volksraad. The Orange Free State had no such office as Commandant-General, their Hoofd-Commandant (Head-Commandant) being nominal only, and subject to President Steyn, who assumed this authority.

Louis Botha, the new commander of the South African Republic, was born on a farm near Greytown, in Natal, and in his early youth attended school in that town, and in Pietermaritzburg, later emigrating to the New Republic, subsequently the Vryheid district, where he saw service in Kaffir wars. A young man of only thirty-six, his ability to control men and seize every vantage in a regular war, had already been proven before Colenso, and General Joubert in an *ante mortem* statement, begged the president and his countrymen to retain him in command. Colonel Villebois Muriel, the French military expert was enthusiastic in praise of Botha. In the early part of the war, before his prowess became widely known, Muriel declared him to be the greatest strategist he had ever known. Botha's appointment was confirmed, not however, without opposition from the older burghers who favored General De la Rey, the older men flocking under the immediate command of the latter, the younger

under Botha, a distinction at once noticeable on riding into either laager.

Cronje was captured and Ladysmith was relieved after 120 days' siege, having lost a thousand men of the garrison, with but one day's provisions between them and capitulation, as admitted by their commander. Buller's casualties in the final assault, were returned at 2,100 killed and wounded. Roberts was in Bloemfontein, and London was wild with delight at the relief, and all forces settled down to recuperate and reinforce.

New rules were formulated for the Republican forces and offensive and defensive measures were sanctioned. The cordon system was discarded, flying columns organized, transports reduced, regular scouting corps formed and an attempt was made to regulate the system of Verlof or leave of absence, a rule being made permitting ten per cent of the burghers leave in rotation. This latter regulation was never lived up to, a burgher who considered an injustice done to him, or overcome by homesickness, on failing to get transportation by railroad, would quietly pack one horse, saddle another, and jog down the road homeward. Regardless whether it took five days or ten, he knew his destination.

Many of the southern Free State burghers, by reason of Roberts' proclamation promising respect to property and freedom of person to those who surrendered, laid down their arms and took an oath of neutrality. This started a feeling of outspoken bitterness between the citizens of the two Republics, emphasized by mutual recriminations. The Orange Free Staters being "cowards," and "white flag" men were greeted with yowls and "hands up!" The Transvaalers were accused of being the cause of the war, and of ingratitude for aid rendered. This spirit continued until the occupation of Pretoria,

the forces often refusing to cooperate, but by that time the Free Staters had proved the hollowness of British promises to respect property, and they returned to the field to make cause against the common enemy.

With the English in possession of Bloemfontein, it was certain that the Free State was the future field of action, and General Meyer was left in command of the Repulicans in Natal to act on the defensive in the Biggarsburg mountains, retaining the smallest force actually necessary. The remainder of the burghers went to the more open country of the Free State where their need was greatest. Lord Roberts had established his headquarters in Bloemfontein, but was delayed from further action on account of having to reestablish his communications and rest his troops. No serious active hostilities occurred either in Natal or the Free State for six weeks. During the alarm which followed the occupation of the Free State capital, the railroad bridges between Smalldeel and Bloemfontein had been effectually, if prematurely destroyed, considerably handicapping the Republican government's transport to its headquarters at Brandfort.

The English had troops operating in the Thabu N'Chu territory east of Bloemfontein, trying to disperse small bodies of Federals who were threatening their communications, and incidentally opposing the effort which was made to intercept the retreat of Generals Oliver, Lemmer and Grobler, on their historic march from Colesberg to Winburg. Many burghers who had not ceased in their flight after the defeat on the Tugela, until they got to their farms, now began to return to their commandos. They had been shamed into returning by the old men and women, who gave them less peace in their own homes than was attainable in the field. A great many wives refused to receive their husbands who had fled in this

manner, and instances are recorded of women bringing their husbands down to the train and forcing them to leave for the front, without being allowed to greet their children or cross their own thresholds. With these recruits and the members of the commands from Colesberg, the united Free State defense would now approximate 7,000 men, with a headquarters on the railroad, at Brandfort, thirty miles north of Bloemfontein, and this Liliputian force again prepared to contest every foot of Roberts' further march north.

On March 16, Captain Danie Theron, the most daring leader of the scouts, destroyed the important railroad bridge at Modder river, called the Glen, which although the British had been in Bloemfontein four days, they had neglected to defend and thereby save this necessary adjutant of their further advance, within thirteen miles of their camp.

Shortly before the arrival of Roberts in Bloemfontein, proclamations had been issued which threatened dire consequences if looting did not cease in the English army and also promising protection of property and stock to the resident farmers, combatant or non-combatant, but as the further advance commenced, and when it was supposed that they had influenced all the burghers to yield who were likely to, the proclamations assumed a different tone and the armies were instructed to live on the country, and if the inhabitants refused to sell at the low prices dictated, their stock was to be seized and receipts given. On all farms where the proprietors were absent, either by being prisoners of war or still in arms, the entire stock was to be confiscated without recompense. Such arbitrary measures did much to assist the Republican governments in their efforts at remobilization, and the burghers regained heart for the cause, in hearing of these abuses.

Louis Botha in command made it understood that the entire duty of the scouting corps was to get information for the generals to whom they were attached. With the regular and irregular scouting in search of food, fruit or loose horses, very little escaped the observation of the continually active burghers. The constant demand for horses was probably the source of the best information. A burgher with a sick horse and little prospect outside of his own effort to replace it, would take desperate chances in any affair with the enemy's scouts, in preference to the possibility of being left afoot.

On March 25, the British advanced to Karree siding, a small station in a range of hills, about half way between Bloemfontein and Brandfort. After a short engagement with the Republican pickets in which they lost severely the English obtained possession, which left nothing but an open flat of ten miles between them and the nearest Boer laagers around Brandfort.

On the thirtieth of March the scouts under Danie Theron informed De Wet at Brandfort that General Broadwood was falling back from Thabu N'Chu in the direction of Bloemfontein. Ordering his men to supply themselves with three days' rations, discarding all transports except ammunition carts, taking five field guns and the foreign military attachés, with a force of 1,200 men, he made an afternoon and night march of forty miles, intercepting the British at the Bloemfontein water-works. He made most of this splendid march at night, through a territory infested with the enemy, with only three stops to feed and rest his men and horses. At intervals during the entire journey, he was informed of the enemy's movements by the scouts, and before daylight he took possession of a deep sluit in the Bloemfontein road, a mile in advance of the sleeping British camp, his brother,

Piet De Wet occupying a small kopje which would flank the expected line of retreat.

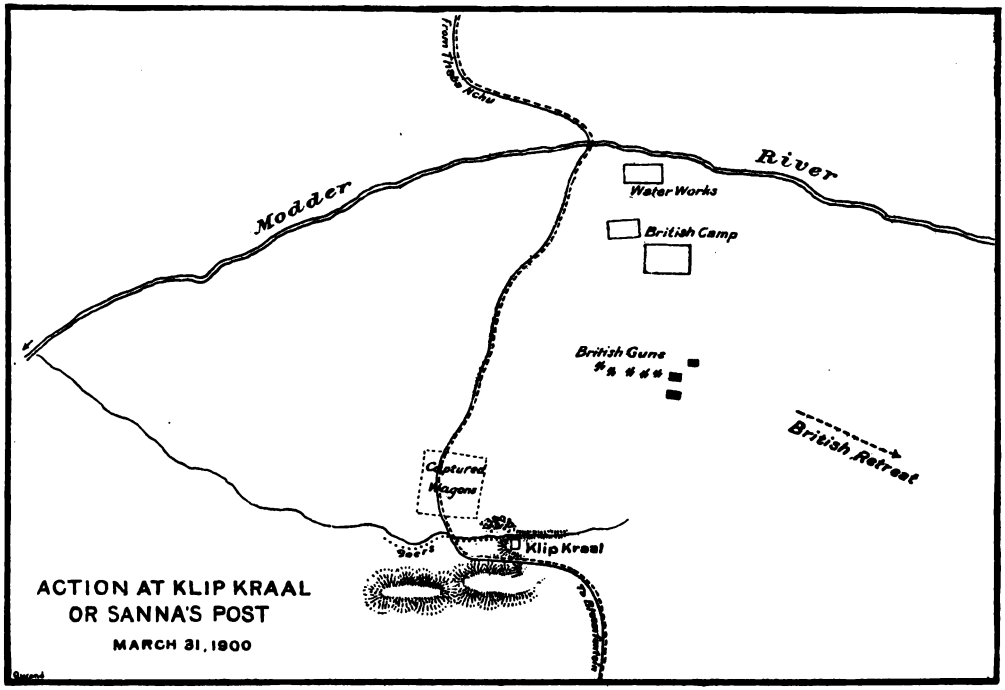
At daylight, the British, lulled into false security, inspanned their transport wagons and started them on the road without an advance guard. One by one the heavy ox wagons lumbered down through the *drift,* the look of surprise on each driver's face being duplicated on the next when they found the sluit full of Republicans. De Wet, himself, signaled each to proceed into the sluit, where they were removed and their positions quickly taken by burghers, who kept the train moving. Through an unavoidable delay in effecting these transfers the wagons became blocked in the ford, causing an officer to ride forward to inquire into the trouble. Encountering De Wet, who, in an unassuming manner, was acting as wagon master for the convoy, he became pale and speechless with amazement. De Wet refused to accept his sword, requesting him to return to his advancing troops, which were within a few hundred yards, and order them to surrender, at the same time pointing out to him how useless resistance would be. The officer gave his promise to do so, but on reaching his company, after a few moments' debate, they fled. De Wet fired the prearranged signal shot at the fleeing officer, who paid the penalty of his broken word, and at once the firing became general all along the line.

Immediately the British camp was in an uproar and wildest confusion, but finally the artillery opened from the camp ground on their own blocked wagons. Oxen were killed, wagons broken and the loaded ammunition scattered by the fire, but no harm was done to the Federals. The cavalry attempted to storm the position in the sluit but were quickly repulsed while the burghers were gradually enveloping the entire column. A portion of the

cavalry with their commanding officer and five guns escaped to the southeast, and though they were harassed for some distance, they eventually outdistanced their pursuers. De Wet, at a cost of three dead, nine wounded and an arduous march, had to his credit 430 prisoners, 160 killed and wounded, with seven cannons and 150 wagons and teams, loaded with a vast amount of ammunition and provisions. The wounded were gathered by the British field ambulance, who were allowed to attend to their own men. The captured wagons were put in order and started north with the prisoners, to avoid the certain attempt at retaliation by the enemy for this daring raid, and reinforcements for the British shortly arrived from the east only to find the field deserted. Lieutenant Nix of the Dutch Netherlands army, attached to the Boers, was unfortunately killed while watching the engagement.

Among the captured baggage of the general, documents were found that substantially confirmed those of similar nature found at Dundee. There were the same routes and surveys, but there was also evidence proving that an organized band of traitors was within the Boer lines, who were in constant communication with the British, by heliograph, messengers, and night signals. This was the first definite evidence that the Republicans obtained of a practise of which the effect had long been felt. Every important movement of the Republicans had been tipped off for past months, notably Cæsar Hill, Hlangwana and Pieter's Hill, and from such or similar sources, the British had always been enabled to strike in the weakest point of the defense. From the information gained, efforts were made to locate these men, but the general retreat shortly following, nothing was discovered.

Four days later, with the same force, De Wet rounded



PLAN SHOWING THE POSITIONS AT SANNA'S POST

up 500 Irish Rifles and Northumberland Fusileers at Reddersburg, who were following the British pastime of searching for arms and intimidating the women unprotected on the farms. After inflicting fifty casualties and taking the rest prisoners, De Wet had succeeded within the week in putting 1,200 men out of action, and capturing seven guns, 2,000 rifles, and a large amount of supplies with a force of 1,500 men. The captured men belonged to Gatacre's column, and this reverse resulted in that general's enforced retirement.

Supported by Commandant Piet De Wet at Dewetsdorp, and General Oliver at Thabu N'Chu, General De Wet transferred his operations southeast of Bloemfontein to Wepener, where he attacked Colonel Dalgetty and his command of 2,000 colonial troops, which had invaded the Orange Free State from Aliwal North. In a short but spirited engagement, De Wet who assumed the offensive from the start and forced the fighting, compelled the colonials to entrench themselves and submit to a siege of seventeen days, during which about 300 of their men were disabled, and most of their horses destroyed. We are acquainted with the reasons which have been advanced by the other side for the escape of Dalgetty, but the Boer commander gives the real one, a lack of ammunition, forcing him to remain passive for the last four days, and only arriving too late, in fact but a few hours before the van of the relieving columns came into conflict with his pickets. The British despatched ten separate forces aggregating 30,000 men, under Generals Bruce, Hamilton, Smith-Dorrien, Pole-Carew, French, Rundle, Brabant, Chermside, Ian Hamilton, Hart, Stevenson, and Broadwood, to relieve Wepener and corral De Wet who was forced by this weight of numbers to abandon his siege and retreat toward Thabu N'Chu.

The treatment of the inhabitants by the Republicans as compared to that of the British, was the extreme opposite, the former being absurdly tender, while the latter was peremptory and harsh. As an example of the second, it might be mentioned that on the occupation of Wepener by De Wet, immediately after its hurried evacuation by Dalgetty, the jail was found packed with white political prisoners and Kaffirs of both sexes huddled together, all of whom were promptly released by order of the Boer general. Among the prisoners whom the timely arrival of the burghers saved from death, was one named H. D. Viljoen, a resident before the war of Aliwal North, and consequently a British subject in the eyes of the law. Viljoen, on the occupation of his town by the Federals allowed himself to be elected a veldkornet, and joined issue with his blood kinsman, on account of which he had now been tried for treason and pronounced guilty. A telegram from Lord Roberts to Dalgetty, only a day old, found among the captured papers of the English colonel, bore eloquent testimony to the close shave which the convicted man had. The telegram read thus "A superior officer has been despatched for purpose of presiding and passing death sentence on infamous rebel Viljoen." The unfortunate man had been warned of his fate for two days, and on his release was found to have turned completely grey in that time from mental agony.

During the brief siege of Dalgetty's column, some daring exploits were planned and executed, principally by small parties of the foreign contingent with De Wet, aided by two or three burghers. The most noted of these stand to the credit of an American named James Foster, or "The Arizona kid," who had deserted from the British transport service at Dewetsdorp, and promiscuously threw in his lot with the Republicans, in whose

service he found a number of his countrymen. Foster and a Boer companion, one night, penetrated the enemy's lines by crawling past the picket and was making for the camp intent on stirring a commotion, during which he hoped to stampede their horses and drive them over to his friends, when he suddenly and unexpectedly encountered a colonial captain whom he knew and had it in for. Ordering the captain (an ex-Johannesburger speaking Dutch fluently) to throw his hands up, he forced him at the point of his gun to run past the pickets, who fired at them, but they finally delivered their prisoner safely to the Boer commando. On arrival in camp, the captain who had spoken Dutch continually with Foster's companion, rated the enterprising American unmercifully in language not unmixed with epithets. The strangest part was the attitude of the Boer, who actually sympathized with the captain, until Foster, a stranger among strangers, was made to feel he was the real victim.

Foster who had been in the U. S. army service, both at home and in Cuba during the war, was a typical American cowboy from Arizona, frolicsome, lithe and reckless, always ready for the sake of excitement, to take part in any sort of enterprise no matter what desperate chances were involved. In consideration of the sum of fifteen dollars and a return passage, he had agreed to accompany a cargo of mules from New Orleans to Cape Town as caretaker. On his arrival at the latter port, the English government paid him the fifteen dollars, but declined to send him or his companions back, alleging that the agreement was, they were to deliver the mules at the front, wherever that might be. Not being able to return or find employment in Cape Town which was overcrowded with refugees, he, together with the other Americans had no other alternative but to go to the front,

where as related he deserted on the first opportunity. Such men as Foster make the very finest irregular troops in the world, and the possibilities of the United States in war time can be gauged when it is known that such material is still abundant in the middle west, and south-western states.

As an illustration of Republican leniency the following is cited: "Louw du Plooy, an Orange Free State burgher who had given up his rifle to the British on the capture of Bloemfontein, was permitted by Lord Roberts to return to his farm on the Modder river. Shortly after he accepted service with the British and led them in their occupation of Karree siding and Tafle Kop. General De la Rey, hearing of this action was incensed and requested one of his scouting corps to endeavor to capture the traitor. du Plooy with the British advance fifteen miles between him and his betrayed countrymen, considered he was sufficiently protected, and complacently retired to his farm, satisfied in his new *rôle* as spy and general informer to his country's enemies, but the scouts, after a night's forced march, passed the pickets, and seizing him in his home, brought him out and delivered him to General De la Rey. Court-martialed he admitted his guilt in the abstract, pleading in extenuation that he was forced by threats into doing wrong. Notwithstanding the evidence was overwhelmingly against him, to the surprise of everyone, particularly the scouts who had risked capture, he was condemned to remain with the burgher army, given an opportunity of vindicating himself, and only verbally censured. Of course he left the very first night to rejoin the British. His capture had cost the enemy two lives and his guilt was proven, yet the Republicans again turned him loose to work them harm, in preference to taking the life of an unarmed man.

What a contrast if the position had been reversed,—if it had been a Britisher; to be captured and judged by the British. If he had survived his captors, his shrift would have been short with the judges.

Colonel Villebois Muriel, the French officer, made a general by the Republican government, was surrounded at Boshof, on April 6, while attempting with an absurdly small force to fight a passage through the British lines, and join the Federals on the extreme west at Fourteen Streams, where he hoped to harass the British communications south of Bloemfontein. His course was most reckless and in spite of the Boers in his command refusing to accompany him, he continued to press forward until surrounded, when he lost his life with forty of his company, twenty becoming prisoners. Of his entire force none escaped, but some stragglers following in his wake saw the tragedy, and returned to Brandfort with the report.

Chapter XII

The advance—An affair on Sunday river—De la Rey—Kaffirs and soldiers—Thabu N'Chu—Vet river—Sand river—Kolbe—Kroonstad abandoned—Lines of communication—Mafeking relieved—Rhenoster river—The Vaal crossed—Destruction of property—Free State proclaimed—Johannesburg occupied—Farewells—The plunder—Newspapers suppressed—The prisoners' grievances—The conduct of officers.

THE British, in three columns, disposed in the following order, were now ready for an advance movement, with Pretoria as the objective. General Roberts, for the centre, to follow the Bloemfontein-Johannesburg railroad, General Methuen to the west, by the Kimberley-Mafeking-Bulawayo railroad, and General Buller in Natal by the Durban-Johannesburg railroad.

In Natal, the Boers, with renewed hopes, advanced their guns on the night of April 9, to a position overlooking the British camp at Elandslaagte on the Sunday river and surprised the army under Sir Francis Clery, while with their kits spread on the ground, they were undergoing Sunday inspection on parade. The troops, on this unexpected aggressiveness from an enemy lately so passive, were taken completely unawares, and fleeing in disorder toward Ladysmith, they forsook their camp, leaving the burghers masters of the situation. The Federals were in too small a force to be actively aggressive, and they failed to follow the advantage, or even wreck the camp, but satisfied with the humor of the *coup* they directed a shell-fire from their two guns at the fleeing troops until they got beyond range, when limbering up, they returned to their camps in the Biggarsburg.

Brandfort still remained the Boer supply centre for the Orange Free State, and here flocked all the correspondents

and attachés in their efforts to obtain news, and sift the many doubtful rumors. Almost anything could be obtained here except reliable information, and there was a general uncertainty of what movements were transpiring to the east and west. For a few days we were able to meet the gifted Irishman Michael Davitt, ex-M. P., who was visiting his countrymen-in-arms on the Republican side, and during his visit the comment was frequently heard that if Ireland had many such forceful sons enlisted in the cause of her welfare, much might then be effected for Ireland's good.

Howard C. Hillegas, the special correspondent of the *New York World* was also there, untiringly collecting information for his paper, and the Republicans have cause to be grateful to him, for the impartial manner in which he has since placed their cause before the American people.

This war, like others, has proved the grave of many a popular hero, while raising to eminence many an unknown man. Among the first may be counted Joubert, Cronje, Lukas Meyer. Apart from the credit which will fall to him from Magersfontein, and his heroic defense at Paardeberg, Cronje, the Buller of the Boers, will of a certainty be outshone by Botha, De Wet, De la Rey, Ben Viljoen, and possibly by Kritzinger and Hertzog. Like Buller, Cronje belonged to a school fast disappearing, and his fall was foredoomed. It is probable that in the future there will always be a certain heroic sentiment surrounding both, but it is safe to predict that no condition will arise which will lift it beyond that, and the Imperial and Republican bull-dogs will in time find that consolation born of a common brotherhood in adversity. The only popular leader before the war who has enhanced his reputation is Johannes De la Rey and his

success has been solely due to his striking personality and progressive tendencies. About middle-aged with a long irregular black beard touched with grey, and bright black eyes, he is above the height of his brother leaders, being six feet and one inch. As a rule he is very quiet, observant without demonstration, of pale complexion, aquiline nose, small mouth. He would strike a careless observer as loosely formed but he has a well-knit flexible body, and his appearance speaks of a refinement which no condition of dress could add to or detract from. It would be hard to erase from the memory the splendid smile of this man. When he gives his orders it is in a subdued even tenor, but decisive and convincing, speaking of tremendous reserve and determination. Like Botha, De Wet and Cronje, he is principally of Huguenot extraction and spent his early life in Griqualand West, Cape Colony, removing later to Rustenburg District, S. A. R., which of recent years he represented in the Volksraad.

The Jameson raid brought him into prominence as a military leader and since then he has been regarded somewhat in the light of Cronje. Unlike De Wet, during the stirring period immediately before the war he counseled moderation, but when matters had reached a stage that there was no alternative between war and surrender, he threw his whole remarkable personality and strength into the task of preparing for the combat. Except for the latent suspicion of sadness caused by the loss of a son and a brother fallen in the war, his demeanor cannot be said to have undergone any change.

The force at the command of General De la Rey, although considerably weakened by the operations to the east, successfully repulsed the British in their first attack on the thirtieth of April. But on the third of May, they again advanced on both sides of the town, De la Rey

General J. De la Rey

deploying to the east with a section of his command, gave battle to the enemy's wing, advancing in that direction, and most gallantly succeeding in forcing them back by an attack delivered in the open against a superior force. The Heidelberg commando, Irish Brigade, the remainder of De la Rey's force left behind at Brandfort, after bravely defending that town against a frontal attack, were outflanked on the west, and the combined Republican forces, forced to fall back on Smaldeel.

General Roberts now split his centre column again into three divisions and the eastern wing advanced to dislodge the Federals from the hills around Thabu N'Chu. General Smith-Dorrien, in command of the Shropshires, the reorganized Gordon Highlanders, and the Canadians, forced an arm between the Federals by reoccupying Thabu N'Chu on April 27. Scouting toward the water works the Federals passed through the deserted farm of Christian Richter, in the garden of which a profusion of delicious tomatoes were found growing. This farm was afterward completely denuded and the dwellings destroyed because it was alleged that the British were fired upon from the latter while it flew the white flag. Helping ourselves to some forage from its well-stocked barn, we called down on us a severe reprimand from the commander, who, although well aware it would fall into the enemy's hands, and enable him to move more quickly by having supplies ready at hand, yet held to his scruples, which was the one inexcusable fault of every general in the Republican army.

On the twenty-eighth, Generals Pole-Carew and Dixon fought an engagement at Leeuwkop, southeast of Winburg, which ended in the capture of Paard Kraal, southwest of Winburg, and at once threatened our retreat. Urgent appeals from De Wet caused most of the foreign

corps to move east, making demonstrations against any hostile force threatening this communication. A noticeable feature of the operations in this quarter, was the almost entire absence of Kaffirs who at other times were very numerous in the Thabu N'Chu district. The dome-like kraals which dotted the country everywhere were always found deserted, only now and then an isolated man being encountered, but women, except very old, not any. All met with, were in abject terror of the British soldiers, for very good reasons as we later discovered, east and near to Houtnek. Passing by a kraal at the foot of a hill, a body of burghers attracted by indistinct cries from a human being, rode up to ascertain the cause, when they fell in with a lone and very old Koranna woman of probably seventy years of age in a condition of intense suffering. Inquiries elicited the knowledge that she, among others, had been outraged by a patrol of "Khaki's" which had passed that morning. She gave her name as Kaatje Swanepoel. Her final words, perhaps the last she uttered, as the command moved on were: "Schiet-hulle-mij bass! Schiet hulle! Hulle es nie mensch-nie!" (Shoot them, my boss, shoot them, they are not human beings!) The general as he turned away with disgust remarked in a subdued tone that the wretched woman had indeed been "khakeed."

Under General Philip Botha, brother of the commander-in-chief, an effort was made to stay Pole-Carew and Hamilton at the range of hills west of Thabu N'Chu. The incline to the position was for the most part very steep on the west side. The burghers occupying the Neks only, and lowest range, gave the enemy an opportunity to possess themselves of the summits, and in dislodging them, although successful, the foreign volunteers suf-

fered severely, losing nineteen men, among them Colonel Maximoff of the Russian corps, severely wounded.

One of the strangest incidents of the war occurred during this engagement, by a peculiar accident to the one Boer Vicker's maxim. A Lee-Metford bullet fired from a Colt's Automatic with a storming party entered the barrel and exploded the shell in the chamber, blowing out the breech and of course completely disabling the gun. The Boers held their positions until outflanked on the north at Houtnek, when we fell back toward Winburg and Ventersburg.

At this time the Republicans were in retreat across the entire state, and with De la Rey ousted from Smaldeel, the forces started to converge toward the railroad, and protect Kroonstad. On May 5, General De la Rey with six guns, a thousand men, and twelve miles of defense, attempted to make a stand at Vet river, the bridge being first destroyed. Once more outflanked, they retired during the night to Sand river, offering opposition wherever cover was available. Winburg was occupied on May 5, without opposition, the Federals now being intent on the defense of Sand river at the railroad, where miles of trenches were dug and the bridge destroyed. Then they decided that the river was unsuitable for defense, and fell back seven miles upon a new position, in a ridge of hills.

Presidents Kruger and Steyn were in Kroonstad making every effort, to inspire the burghers with courage to defend the new capital. The old president had just arrived from Pretoria where the Volksraad had met to debate on the situation and all the surviving members had laid aside their rifles and donned their black conventional garb. Lukas Meyer, chairman of the Raad

opened the meeting with prayers for the missing dead of the parliament, then the president offered a resolution for the continuation of the war, which passed unanimously, and the burgher senators adjourned, quietly dispersing to their various commands to resume their rifles.

General Kolbe, an estimable old gentleman farmer residing, before the outbreak of the war at Kaalspruit, eight miles from Bloemfontein, had not until now attracted any special attention, beyond a reputation well-merited for gentle manners and good nature. At this time, however, he came prominently into notice, by fighting, with a following of only 125 men, a splendid rear-guard action during the retreat, and by rapidly falling back, entrenched himself in the drift on Sand river, which, it was expected, the enemy would surely make an effort to seize. By this manœuvre he undoubtedly checked the turning movement contemplated, as on the arrival of Hutton's scouts, he was discovered already in possession and strongly entrenched. Such a movement if successfully effected, might have been very disastrous to the Republicans, who could hardly have prevented the capture of the major portion of their transports. It was then generally conceded that Kolbe gave evidence of possessing ability to lead men. In character, general conduct, and, it might be said, almost in looks, he resembled General De la Rey of the Transvaal forces, in fact he might be appropriately styled the De la Rey of the Orange Free State. Kolbe's usefulness was limited before his merits were discovered, because his sphere of action had been proportionately reduced, through large numbers of surrenders from his command on the occupation of Bloemfontein.

The elaborate trenches on the north of Sand river again

proved abortive, news being brought that the English had effected a crossing thirty miles to the east. There was no alternative but to fall back toward the Vaal, the English making every effort to reach Pretoria on the twenty-fourth of May, the anniversary of the late Queen's birthday.

Kroonstad was abandoned and Heilbron to the north-east proclaimed the capital, and it became the temporary resting place of the government, the main column of Transvaal burghers falling back on the Rhenoster river. Roberts reached Kroonstad on May 12, where he rested his forces for eight days, rebuilding the railroad bridges and reestablishing his lines of communication.

There was little further concerted opposition to the British advance, and the Republican hopes now rested in the British communications. Every day's advance increased the enemy's difficulties, and the Federals' only remaining plan of campaign was, while resisting capture to attack the long-extended lines of communication wherever practicable.

On May 13, Colonel Mahon, following the Kimberley-Mafeking railroad, joined Colonel Plumer at Nasebi, west of Mafeking. The relief force for the garrison was now close, and on the seventeenth, three days after this junction, at a Krygsraad held by the besieging commanders, it was decided to make a final effort to carry the place by storm, before it was lost to them. The more timid had overruled their superiors when this action had been suggested. They disliked the thought of rushing the trenches, and the vote of a subordinate officer being equal to that of a general, the proposition had been defeated whenever it had been previously made. Now, however, with the relieving army in sight, they realized that the town had to be reduced without delay or never.

That momentous question settled in the affirmative, Sarel Eloff, the grandson of President Kruger, at the head of a handful of volunteers, stormed on the night of the seventeenth, capturing the market place in the centre of the town, and reduced the defenders to a few dug out trenches impossible for a continued resistance. After a siege of 215 days, this small force demonstrated what could have been done earlier in the siege, toward sparing Baden-Powell, the undeserved, hero-comic hysteria of a people grasping at any shadow capable of being interpreted as glorifying a dishonorable war of revenge. The attacking party instead of forcing the advantage gained, was so elated by its success that it began to celebrate with the English canteen supplies in the captured commissariat, until Eloff in turn was besieged by the relieving force arriving in the rear, and made prisoner on the eve of success with most of his officers.

This was the second time in this war that liquor caused a disaster to the Republican army, but the more cautious had slipped away when the debauch commenced, and rejoining General Snyman with the reserve, they watched the relief of the garrison, and the jubilation which followed, when with the artillery they started a forlorn march to Johannesburg. Among the assaulting party and the one who guided them into the town, was an Irishman name Tottie Hayes, who had deserted from Baden-Powell's force and joined the burghers. On arrival in the market place he had the novel experience of reading a posted notice of a reward for himself dead or alive. He had been sentenced to severe punishment for striking a superior officer but escaped to the Republicans with whom he enlisted, succeeding later, in one of the British sorties, in killing the officer he had struck, and getting his sword as a trophy. He was accepted in perfect faith

A View of Mafeking and Boer Forts

by his new compatriots as a daring and desperate man. No risk was too great that permitted him to wreak his vengeance on his former comrades, and choosing by preference the territory over which they operated, he followed them untiringly, happy only when he returned to camp with the gun or horse of one of their pickets or scouts.

On May 22, the position on Rhenoster river was outflanked by Roberts and the same tactics followed on May 26, at the positions on the Vaal which were very unsuitable for defense if attacked, but the English wing crossed at Bosch Bank, thirty miles east of the positions, and the Republicans were forced to fall back reluctantly on the range of hills on Klip river, fifteen miles south of Johannesburg.

Rumors were in the air of all sorts of dire things which would happen when we reached Johannesburg, and there was without doubt an element bent in defiance of the government on destroying the gold mines on the Rand and wreaking vengeance on the owners and workers who had caused this disastrous war to the Republic, but the spirit of conciliation and Christianity prevailed, and the mines and personal property of their bitterest enemies left intact, in fearful contrast to the policy of extermination and destruction carried out by the British against the humblest homestead. In the retreat through Natal, the enemy's territory, stores were left untouched, and if the British storekeepers refused to sell their goods to the needy Federals, no power was used to compel them, the burghers being even forbidden to take a stick of wood, either, that hauled to the houses or in any way part of the fixings, fences, etc.

In the early part of the war, Sir Alfred Milner had addressed a note to the governments of the Republics,

when their troops were occupying Natal, threatening severe retribution if the abuse of private property was permitted and pointing out that it was no part of civilized warfare. The governments needed no such reminder of their duty as Christians and feared not the menace, but in what contrast have Sir Alfred Milner's countrymen acted in Republican States, burning, looting, and destroying. Widows made homeless because a son or brother was fighting, aged parents forced on the veldt roofless, because their male offspring were not near them, wives and daughters, with scant apparel to cover their bodies, turned adrift at the mercy of Kaffirs; not even the homes of prisoners of war in distant St. Helena and Ceylon were spared, all because of some daring raid in the neighborhood of their farm. Every habitable shack was destroyed by dynamite and fire only to inflict misery of the women and children of the men that continued to oppose them. What a cruel revenge for 300,000 men, backed by a powerful nation to wreak on 30,000 homely farmers, simple and patriotic.

In Natal during the operations, there were English farmers on the line of defense that used to revile the Republicans who passed their homesteads. They would barely consent to sell them milk and butter, always freely expressing their hopes of the outcome of each engagement. These men lost not one sheep, nor was there ever a guard placed to watch if they carried information, and the burghers would laugh good-naturedly when told by them of their own enormities.

On the twenty-fourth of May the Queen's birthday, General Roberts proclaimed the Orange Free State as a British possession, under the name of the Orange River Colony. He had possession of the railroad but the combatant Free Staters, none of whom crossed the Vaal re-

mained in their own country to dispute the right of possession. How effectually every one knows, the British at no time being safe beyond the range of their own fortifications.

The next day F. R. Burnham, the American scout, who had served the British in all the late Kaffir wars, destroyed the railroad between Elandsfontein and Pretoria, which cut off the retreat by rail from Johannesburg to Pretoria, the British troops occupying Germiston, the junction, after a slight skirmish. For two days further, De la Rey and Ben Viljoen, contested every possible hill south of Johannesburg, but the weight was too much for them, and an extended flanking movement to cut off their retreat to Pretoria, with a movement through Krugersdorp, forced them to abandon the town. A few of the more adventurous, and the Johannesburg Police, in an endeavor to snatch a farewell with their families, stayed till the last moment, fighting a street to street conflict with the advance guard before they effected their escape.

The defense of Johannesburg was impossible without terrible loss to non-combatants. The one fort built after the Jameson raid, at a cost of $250,000 to command the town and jail, was of no service in this emergency, and its one muzzle loading, fifteen centimetre gun was abandoned with the fort as useless.

Many of the Boer auxiliaries were captured. Others threw away their arms and posed as non-combatants considering the struggle at an end. Doctor Fritz Krause, the late Assistant State Attorney, who then filled the office of governor of the town, delivered up the keys to the invaders, and many of the time-served officials remained to take office under the British administration, forming an efficient secret service, which caused their

countrymen much suffering, and illustrated the woeful manner in which British gold had won most of their successes. The inhabitants were in the wildest confusion from the sounds of the cannon so near, and the weirdest stories of dynamite mines and universal destruction were told. It made the scenes very distressing to men seeing their wives and children possibly for the last time, forced to leave them to their uncertain fate. How few then pictured the awful reconcentrado camps into which the women would be forced from their comfortable homes, or guessed the terrible mortality in these pens of filth, where refined women and children have by mouldy and insufficient food and exposure, died at the rate of two and a half per cent a month or, in other words, extermination of a race in a little over four years.

By the destruction of the railroad the British secured nineteen locomotives and all the Natal rolling stock previously captured by the burgher army. Their troops had done some splendid marching on scant food, to reach the town and attempt the interception of the Republicans, who left all too hurriedly. With a little organization the rolling stock could easily have been rendered useless to the captors. One infantry regiment is recorded to have made seventeen miles a day for eight days, and others to have made as good a showing. On arrival in Johannesburg they confined their activity chiefly to satisfying their hunger by a door-to-door canvass, the Boer wives being as sympathetic as the foreign residents.

One of the first acts of the new military authorities was the suppression of the Republican organ, the *Standard, and Digger's News* edited by Messrs. Mendelssohn and Bruce, which, with the *Volksteem* published in Pretoria, had printed the government official news and formed the only medium whereby the hope and justice

of the cause was carried to the higher court of public opinion in the outside world.

On the twenty-eighth, James Smith, the American messenger boy, arrived in Pretoria with an address signed by 29,000 school children of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, sympathizing with President Kruger and his people in their affliction. The following day the unwisdom of defending Pretoria, having been generally recognized and accepted, President Kruger, accompanied by the majority of his advisers with the state archives and available currency, left for Machadodorp.

The greater proportion of military stores had been shipped to Machadodorp and Lydenburg, and in addition 900 of the British prisoners had been transshipped by rail from their camp at Waterval, to Nooitgedacht. An outcry had been made of alleged neglect of the government to supply all the wants of the prisoners, and demands were constantly being pressed for materials which were beyond the power of the government to furnish. Cots were supplied to the hospitals, and lumber given to enable the sound men to make their own bunks. Bathing places were also constructed as soon as it was possible, but the principal grievance was that vermin infested the camp. In extenuation, fresh relays of constantly arriving prisoners were making cleanliness difficult, and changes of clothing, a most embarrassing problem; for a government without sufficient clothes for their own soldiers in the field.

Committees were appointed among their officers, and Lieutenant Nesbit, captured at Mafeking, placed in charge of all arrangements, with permission to go into the town and buy necessaries and such luxuries as their means permitted. Complaints were made that exorbitant prices were being charged, but this was regarded as

purely a matter of business between themselves and the merchants, who on account of scarcity, had raised prices for the general public on every article of clothing, as burghers and prisoners were both anxious to buy at any price. Facilities were given through the U. S. consul for forwarding and distributing all mail and supplies sent them by their sympathizers in the colonies and England.

The officers at the commencement, were confined in the model school situated in the heart of the town, and were privileged to purchase anything for their own personal comfort that they desired, but they behaved in a manner unbecoming even the most depraved trooper in their command. By making filthy gestures and using obscene language they constantly insulted ladies, who, probably from curiosity, had the temerity to pass the building in which they were located. These offenses grew so bad that the women of the general public petitioned, and the government removed them to the buildings specially constructed, immediately outside and east of the town. This is no vilification, and while we are prepared to acquit a great many of such conduct, we claim the statement to be an uncontrovertible fact.

Chapter XIII

Pretoria abandoned and why—Scenes in town—Buller in the Transvaal—The Biera expedition—The new government—Hoisting the flag—The arsenals—Ammunition—Small arms—Government shops—The work of the dynamite factory—Colonial volunteers.

THE intelligence that the government had determined not to defend Pretoria now reached the Federal army, which was slowly falling back on that town. At first it created some surprise, as for many reasons it had been looked upon as the next point for a combined stand, but the wisdom of the authorities was obvious, inasmuch as the town defense would have meant the bottling up of the entire aggressive force of the army, a weary disconcerting siege, and eventual disaster. The capital in this Republican country, unlike European capitals was by no means the heart or life of its existence. The troops were able to subsist on the country even where the others would starve, oblivious of the existence or otherwise of a capital, and remain on the aggressive. But had they submitted to a siege, they would have had to hold miles of defenses, requiring every available man, with no hope of ultimate success.

The four forts, built at a cost of $250,000 each, were utterly useless against the heavy siege train the English had brought from the coast, containing two nine and a half inch and four six and a half inch Howitzers, the former throwing a 780 pound shell, against which no loose dirt and brick fort could possibly stand. With such an armament the besiegers would simply have battered the life out of all resistance with their heavy weight batteries, or calmly awaited the inevitable result while

they occupied the surrounding country and railroads with the surplus from their huge army. The gold mines would have again started milling, many of their troops would have been recalled and the conquest declared complete, and the remnant of the Republican army with its cry for liberty, would have been relegated to the wilderness, and except now and then a spasmodic gasp unheard, the dying struggle would be strangled in the boasted resumption of commercial activity and the elation of the conquerors.

From the time Pretoria was abandoned, the power of England has steadily declined, each day adding to their difficulties, until the situation, at one time very dismal for the Republics, has become reversed. Time and again the enemy have been forced to pursue defensive policy. By every fresh advance they enlarged the field of operations, the contending forces became more equalized, and the danger to the invaders proportionally greater, until the area effectually occupied by them in June, 1900, has steadily decreased, and the advantage gained by the partial control of the railroad become more imaginary than real, there being no longer safety for a British patrol in any district of South Africa. Although it had not been made public, it had some time previously been decided by the two presidents that it was for the best interest of the Republic to evacuate Pretoria, the wisdom of which the burghers, now retiring from Johannesburg were slow to recognize. They were sick at heart and weary from a long, tedious retreat, and were hurrying toward the capital where it was expected a determined resistance would be made, such as would furnish a sadly needed diversion. Disappointed, these citizens, half-hunter, half-soldier turned mechanically toward the open veldt, and from that day the war assumed an entirely new phase.

There were to be no more aimless flights so destructive to men and animals.

Slowly they fell back, fighting sharp engagements, with the east wing at the Springs, and inflicting loss at every step. The dynamite factory containing large supplies of explosives was mistakenly spared, in deference to the Continental share-holders, friendly to the Republics. Again they resisted at Six Mile Spruit, just six miles from Pretoria, where they were successful in again causing delay and loss, capturing two British field guns and recapturing a Vicker's maxim, but it was only temporary for the superior weight soon made itself felt, and forced them to the town, then alive with excitement. Everywhere little groups were encountered, each man anxious to advance a theory or air some affected grievance. The Grand Hotel and Transvaal Arms were crowded with newspaper correspondents and foreigners, undecided what course to pursue or intent on getting a last square meal.

The government stores were thrown open, the remnant of the supplies piled in the street for the benefit of the burgher families remaining behind, and looting was rife among the more lawless and the Kaffirs. Bands of armed men streamed in, weary from the protracted fighting, hungry for something to eat. The government bakeries had been closed, and men took what came to hand; officers trying to find supplies for their men were dashing in every direction, foreign volunteers were giving up their arms and abusing the government for its flight, and all the while the fighting raged outside the town where General Botha with a handful of men were contesting every vantage against the advancing hordes. The passage of armed men became more frequent, and it was plain that things were going badly. Finally a few heavy shells, hurled at the fort, all of which had been dismantled and aban-

doned, fell in the town near the U. S. consulate, and further resistance seemed suspended.

Among the last to pass through the town was Louis Botha, mounted on a white horse, bleeding from the shoulder, surrounded and followed by a faithful body-guard, who always kept close to him. Botha's magnificent rally at Six Mile Spruit had given the frightened inhabitants and the undecided, three days' grace, but at last the British were hammering at the gates of the capital, and as the long straggling bodies of hungry and disheartened men wended their way in and out to the east, mounted on their tired horses, who dragged their feet as only overworked ponies can, the whole presented an extremely forlorn and dirty appearance; illuminating in a most vivid manner the picture of real war with all its horrors. Many of the burghers reached Middleburg and even as far as Machadodorp before they drew rein or could be induced to return to join their commanders. Botha as he passed along, threatened, remonstrated and exhorted the men to stand firm and fight for the freedom dearly bought by their fathers, and his splendid example alone was again the salvation of the army. In ten days they were prepared to offer a resistance as stubborn as before.

Buller, whom Roberts had relied upon to cut his way through the Natal lines, and from the southeast to intercept the Boer retreat, had failed for the time, to overcome the opposition of Christian Botha, an older brother of the commandant-general, but by a flanking movement through the Biggarsburg by way of Helpmaakar, which gave him Dundee, he eventually succeeded in threatening Botha, who immediately fell back, whereon the English commander advanced his lines to Laings Nek. Here, again, the right of way was disputed, and some sharp

COMMANDANT-GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA

fighting resulted, but once more Buller flanked, now preferring such methods to direct attacks, and by this means he forced a passage over the border to Standerton, occupying that town on June 11. The Republicans, dispirited with news from Pretoria, and now menaced in the rear by Roberts, moved away to the north. General Buller, after the many boasts credited to him, had now at last reached the coveted Transvaal territory, but alas for him, too late to lend any material aid in immediately subduing the Republican inhabitants, who had by this time almost completely recovered from the panic attending the fall of Pretoria and were prepared to go on contesting the ownership of the country in spite of proclamations.

An elaborate expedition had been fitted out about April in Durban, under Colonel Carrington, who, with 5,000 men and horses was transported to Biera, where taking advantage of a treaty with the Portuguese, which permitted that port to be used for the passage of troops, if the Rhodesian territory was threatened, they moved the troops across this neutral territory with the object of threatening the Federals from the north in conjunction with Buller and Roberts. But fever among his troops, and the Tseti fly, the bite of which is certain death to a horse, somewhat upset the calculations of Colonel Carrington, who, with these disadvantages to combat, only succeeded in reaching Tuli, on the northern border, in June. In an attempt to reach Johannesburg from there, he fell a victim to General De la Rey at Deerdeport, who, sent to intercept him administered a severe defeat and again drove him beyond the border.

Thus General Roberts' two flanking movements, General Buller from the south and Colonel Carrington from the north, having for their object an attack on Pretoria,

simultaneously with the main column, miscarried, and the Republicans had no difficulty in making their escape. This plan, if it had succeeded, would have isolated the burgher main bodies in a circumscribed area, and brought the war to an early close after Pretoria, by the capture of these bodies, and if that was the object aimed at, as a purely military measure it was well conceived, but it had no chance of succeeding in the nature of things, which Lord Roberts would have known if he had been familiar with the climatic disadvantages, or knew his wily foe.

Pretoria was entered on June 5, and General Maxwell put in complete control. A policy of seeking out sympathizers with the Republicans was at once inaugurated, and in this they were ably aided by a few traitorous employés of the late government, who enrolled themselves in the secret service for the purpose of ingratiating themselves with the new powers that were. Late members of the Republican army who remained with their families, and all suspected persons were put under surveillance and forced to report daily, but a real outrage was inflicted on the women in Johannesburg, to whom, upon application, permits were issued to remain in the town, conditional upon their appearing to report once a day in the public market-place. The British administrators must have been so pricked with the humiliation which this abuse of the burghers' wives brought on them, that they made strenuous efforts to recover and destroy the evidence by recalling these permits. When they were not forthcoming, prices were offered ranging from five dollars to seven dollars and a half, to induce the women to part with them, but although many were without food, they recognized the satire embodied in their possession, and retained them to show their husbands, an opportunity

occurring when they were expelled from the town and their homes in July.

On the British occupation the houses were searched both in Pretoria and in Johannesburg for arms, and all personal provisions were commandeered for the British army. The remainder, after the army's wants had been supplied, was sent to the market places where it was disposed of at high prices to the original owners, or doled out as charity to those who had not the means wherewith to purchase.

The British, on marching into Pretoria, found lined along the street 3,000 men and 148 officers, all of whom had been prisoners, but had come into the town on their guard being withdrawn. A grand parade of 26,000 men and 110 guns followed. The Imperial flag was hoisted on the government building amidst cheers and the strains of the national air, and Pretoria became a military garrison. While all this was in progress, a small column of Federal scouts crept up to Irene Station, where, by destroying the bridge, they cut the railroad communication between Johannesburg and Pretoria, and then generally made things lively in the rear. With the capital, the invaders became possessed of twenty locomotives, 225 cars loaded with merchandise in the railroad yards, and 500,000 rounds of Mauser ammunition which the government had been unable to remove to the east.

The arsenals were the most efficient military feature in Pretoria, being a complete catacomb of tunnels, cut in the western hills close to the artillery camp. They contained at the beginning of the war,

	Shell	Shrapnel	Cannister
Long Toms.....	3,970	3,980	759
Howitzer 12 centimetre.....	2,864	1,114	...
Creusot quick fire 75 millimetre...	4,946	5,575	488

	Shell	Shrapnel	Cannister
Krupp quick fire 37 millimetre...	3,402	1,966	232
Nordenfeldt 75 millimetre.....	1,977	370	136
Vicker's Maxim Nordenfeldt....	56,311		

The furnished list of small arms they were said to contain was:

Mauser Rifles	26,785
Mauser Carbine Rifles.....	6,034
Martini-Henri Rifles	3,190
Westley Richards Rifles.....	8,954
Guedes, Lee-Metfords, Krag Jorgensens, and other rifles.....	4,000
Webly and Mauser pistols.....	6,000

In all about 40,000 magazine rifles and 15,000 of Westley Richards and Martini-Henri patterns with 6,000 modern revolvers sufficient to supply every burgher of both states with an efficient weapon according to their choice, the older rifles of which every burgher already possessed one, being discarded, broken or hidden to avoid the trouble of returning them to the government.

There was no scarcity of small arms ammunition as the following summary will show:—

17,000,000 Mauser.
10,500,000 Martini-Henri, black smoked powder.
10,500,000 Guedes, (Stal points,) Krag Jorgensens.
1,000,000 Lee-Metfords.
1,871,176 Martini-Henri Maxims, smokeless.
1,576,100 Lee-Metford Maxims.
500,000 Revolver.

The Orange Free State having in their arsenal

1,628,000 Mauser.
3,500,000 Martini-Henri.

The ammunition not specially designated was smokeless, but notwithstanding the enormous quantity, even this became scarce after the first ten months of hostilities.

Twenty thousand projectiles were manufactured for the Krupps and captured Armstrongs, and 6,000 for the Vicker's maxims, at the various shops in Johannesburg and Pretoria, organized by the government under the direction of skilled labor, and the superintendence of Leon and Grundberg, both agents of Schneider and Company in France, who had arrived in the Republic to inspect the mounting of the six-inch Creusots bought from their firm for the Pretoria forts. The larger proportion of the shells were manufactured at the shops of Begbie and Company and Wright, Boag and Company, of Johannesburg, the government supplementing the necessary machines from material collected in the different shops on the mines, until the most complete plants were established. They also experimented upon incendiary shells, but they were not a success. The body of the shell would be lengthened and combustibles, such as resin, and phosphorus inserted with the intention of firing buildings, but they failed upon experiment to do the work designed. The work of these shops was commenced so late that they had just demonstrated their success in April, when destroyed by an incendiary explosion which wrecked the entire neighborhood. The mine, with great ingenuity was exploded by the electric lighting wire being connected with a detonator in the store room, the switching on of the current in the evening, causing the death of nearly the entire force employed. Many arrests were made, but in the limited time preceding the British occupation they failed to locate the perpetrators in a country full of British spies, it only resulting in the majority of the

remaining British subjects being put over the border. As they had in other manners made themselves obnoxious, while enjoying protection, publicly promoting champagne dinners and festivals whenever a success was given to their countrymen over the Republicans, little sympathy was felt for them.

The government also fitted shops for the repair of small arms and artillery in Pretoria where the experts improved and perfected a time fuse for the Creusot guns. The fuse already used in the shrapnel of these guns had been found unreliable by breaking on the discharge of the gun rendering the explosive charge in the shell ineffectual, and consequently innoxious to the enemy.

The Krupp guns were easily repaired, but the Creusots, from a very bad recoil, needed constant attention, and were more difficult to keep in order. Messrs. Delfos Brothers, enterprising machinists, proved invaluable in supervising the extraction of lead from the mines east of Pretoria, near Donkerhoek, and also in repairing the heavy ordnance and doing the gun-turning when required.

The dynamite factory, situated in an isolated position at Modderfontein five miles west of Zurfontein on the Johannesburg-Pretoria railroad, the subject of so much earlier controversy, was as Oom Paul had intimated before the war, " The corner stone of the state." Without this plant the army would have been without ammunition or explosives early in the year. Under the superintendence of M. Vorstman acting as direct agent of the government, and the subsidiary shops of Pretoria and Johannesburg taking the orders from them, they receiving the finished shell and reloading them prior to delivery, insuring their reliability beyond the power of tampering from agents of the British who filled the

country, using money to corrupt any branch of the public service found amenable.

This factory experimented and succeeded in manufacturing a smokeless powder equal to the best already used, reloaded 250,000 Mauser cartridges, extracting the smoke-powder from 200,000 Martini-Henri cartridges, and refilled them with this product of their own manufacture. Besides keeping a constant supply of dynamite, they succeeded in producing a lyddite explosive, but too late to be of service, the entire supply falling into the hands of the British on occupation. In addition to such experiments they manufactured all the supplies necessary for artillery, time-fuses, primer tubes, percussion fuses complete, friction primers, composite rings for fuses, ballistite, quick match, fulminite of mercury, and hydrochloric acid, the whole forming a most complete plant and making the Republicans altogether independent of imports for their artillery, until the factory was lost to them.

They were also successful in manufacturing a form of torpedo, designed by a German volunteer for destroying railroad tracks and trains, the torpedo, being placed on the track and exploded on the passage of anything on the rails. The capacity of this plant in peace time had been 210,000 fifty-pound boxes of dynamite in the year, 150,000 boxes of which were stored as a reserve of the Republican government, but beyond a limited quantity transshipped, the greatest bulk of the explosives fell to the British on their advance against Pretoria.

The colonial troops had borne the brunt of the rapid advance through the Free State, always being placed in the van, and while, because of the greater license enjoyed, they were more given to excesses in their conduct toward the defenseless inhabitants than the regular soldiers, they

were the more formidable by reason of superior shooting and general knowledge of distances and topography. The statement of Winston Churchill M. P. that 3,000 American citizens had been engaged on the British side, can be dismissed as utterly absurd, there being not many more than that number in hundreds, and they, for the most part, consisted of such men as Foster, previously mentioned, who having been stranded from the mule ships had no choice but to enlist or starve.

It has been stated on reliable authority that in the beginning of April, 1900, there were 12,000 colonial volunteers from Australia, New Zealand and Canada in South Africa. Sir Alfred Milner asserted in the Cape Parliament, that, in addition to the foregoing, there were 24,000 British South Africans serving as volunteers under the Imperial flag, which together with the Indian contingent of 3,000 irregulars, made a force of 40,000 colonials, who taken together were equivalent in offensive fighting to the 166,227 regular troops shipped from England. Of the colonials, those of South African birth we must give the credit of being the most dangerous, and also the most lawless. They set the pace and the others made the running.

Looking at the totals in men and guns, one marvels that the Republicans have withstood for so long a period the onslaught of the mighty battalions with all the latest death-dealing appliances hurled against them. It sends a ray of hope into the breast of the plain mortal who yearns for expatriation from the thralldom of princes, lords, and plutocrats, and establishes a new era in freedom of heart and action, which is undaunted even by bayonets.

The present struggle of the Boer is understood by but a few, but the time will come, when for the splendid lesson taught, they will be glorified by many of the free,

"LONG TOM," 6-INCH CREUSOT, ENTRAINED

sovereign peoples of the earth, who have yet to win their freedom, which can only be attained by such consolidation of individual effort and lofty patriotism as the burgher armies represent.

Chapter XIV

Donkerhoek—Proclamations—De la Rey's activity—Bronkhorstspruit—Pienaar—Farm burning—Krugersdorp proclamation—Paardekraal—Deportation of women—A big trek—Farewell to Middleburg.

THE burghers no longer with homes or wives to visit, the question of furlough sank out of existence. Every one was willing to stay till the last in the field, which was now his home and source of supply. Reorganized and confident again, they defended Donkerhoek in the open country with a ridge of hills the only possible defense. For two days against a tremendous bombardment, they fought desperately, their own siege gun, mounted on a railroad car doing great service. The tell-tale balloon employed after the first brush, bore evidence of uncertainty and that the repulse had somewhat staggered the English. After suffering great loss the enemy started a flanking movement, and the Boer column wisely fell back, on June 12, to Balmoral, the next possible point of defense, on the Pretoria-Lorenzo Marques railroad. The British failed to follow and court another action, but left a battalion to garrison the hills, the great bulk of the forces returning to the Free State to hunt President Steyn and De Wet, who had taken the aggressive and were controlling many points of the railroad, cutting the British off from their base of supplies.

Lord Kitchener who was in personal command, only just missed being captured at Leuuspruit on the ninth. His personal baggage and papers, however fell into the hands of De Wet, who jocosely remarked that he had assumed the railroad traffic managership.

After the occupation of Standerton on June 17, by

General Buller, and his joining hands with Lord Roberts at Johannesburg, Durban became a new base of supplies for the invading army, nor did the Republicans fail to share now and then from this bountiful source. The Federals had made great efforts to destroy Laings Nek railroad tunnel by discharging a car of dynamite in the centre and blowing up both ends. But in a week the British army engineers had cleared the road for traffic, thereby relieving the congestion of the thousand mile Cape Town-Johannesburg railroad.

On July 1, Roberts, chafing over his failure to reduce the Orange Free State by military measures, issued a proclamation, practically, withdrawing belligerent rights from all burghers, who failed to make their submission in fourteen days. All former proclamations were revoked and war on private property (called military expedients) actively commenced.

General De la Rey, taking advantage of the diversion created by the operations in the Free State, made a demonstration toward Rustenburg, and the British garrison taking alarm, fled hastily towards Pretoria, the Republicans, after a close pursuit, failing to overtake them, then, supported by General Erasmus, suddenly invested Waterval, and subjected the garrison of that town to defeat, capturing their supplies and forcing them likewise to seek safety in flight. The activity of the burghers at this stage, knew no bounds, and increased so menacingly that the enemy became naturally alarmed. Daring raids were frequent occurrences in the environs of Pretoria, at times within three miles of the town, where outlying camps were shelled and garrisons invited to combat. No military post seemed immune from attack, and among the English and non-combatant element, a general feeling of restless anxiety prevailed.

June 29 found the active De la Rey opposing Methuen at Oliphant's Nek, then on his way to relieve Baden-Powell besieged in Rustenburg, but on his being flanked, he wisely abandoned the siege, allowing the relieving column to accomplish its mission. Moving away rapidly to the northwest, the same Boer commander three days later, fell on a British convoy at Deerdepoort, distant eighty miles from Rustenburg. This column was part of the long-delayed force of Carrington's just arriving after their exhausting trip from Biera and laboriously making their way to join the commander-in-chief in Pretoria. Fearing greater disaster, Carrington assumed a defensive attitude and fell back over the border. De la Rey destroyed the Mafeking-Kimberley railroad, then returned once more to his favorite positions in the neighborhood of Waterval, north of Pretoria. His appetite appeared to be only increased with his successes for becoming fiercely aggressive on July 13, he rushed the British camp at Moszeliekats Nek, garrisoned by five companies of Highlanders, and captured the entire camp and wagons, with two field guns, a maxim and a hundred prisoners, besides inflicting sixty-eight casualties, only a few escaping to tell the story in Pretoria. The same day an outpost at Swartkopjie, within five miles of Pretoria, was driven into the garrison, being forced to abandon their camp.

Compelled by stress of events which brought them face to face with the inevitable struggle for existence, then only beginning, the Republican armies everywhere in the extensive field of operations, were rapidly undergoing a phase which for lack of an adequate expression might be called reorganization. Duties became more exacting and less optional, with a corresponding healthy increase in the activities. Chris Botha, commanding in the south-

east, although brushed aside by General Buller, made a raid into Natal from Utrecht, and after defeating the garrison at Ingogo, he destroyed the railroad. General Louis Botha, to the east, was not idle although seriously hampered by the responsibility of protecting the government. He feared a flanking movement by a flying column from the south aimed at Machadodorp, which would threaten the government officers and depots and drive a wedge in between his own and his brother's commands. In spite of this he advanced his camps from Balmoral across the open country to Bronkhorstspruit, the scene of the disaster to the English in the war of '81 at which place their force engaged was nearly annihilated with a loss of but one man to the Boers attacking. This fight was fought in the open, and not in a ravine as British historians would have the world believe. The English soldiers were attacked on an open road while marching, and although armed with breech-loading rifles, while their opponents had only old muzzle loaders, they were content to fire only one volley at the advancing foe, before forming into a hollow square with fixed bayonets, to receive what they expected would be a charge. The charge never came, for the burghers, advancing in loose formation to within two hundred yards, simply dropped into the long grass, and poured a steady hail of lead into the closely packed ranks. The return fire was ineffectual, as the rifles were afterwards found sighted for six hundred yards, the distance at which their first volley had been fired, and the dazed troops, with that magnificent lack of initiative, the pride of the subordinate British officer, maintained their suicidal square until rout ensued. This is in brief the story of that old but misrepresented action, which sounded the death-knell of the former famous system of British warfare, although later

employed against Arabs and Ashantees. The treachery and ambush story existed only in the imagination of the story teller or medal-seeking officer, the massacre being the simple result of the antiquated defense against sharpshooters.

To return to the present operations, Louis Botha now threatened the garrison at Donkerhoek and Pienaar's Poort, and daily skirmishes with the enemy became the order.

Similar demonstrations made toward the Springs south of Pretoria, aimed at menacing the railroad connection between that town and Johannesburg, succeeded with each raid in destroying a bridge or in some manner crippling the road. The enemy's outpost at Vlakfontein was continually harassed by General Pienaar from Bronkhorstspruit, their position once being forced at Witpoortje, and camp and wagons destroyed, after which on a vastly superior force making a vigorous movement against the captured positions, Pienaar withdrew to avoid isolation or capture, only to return once more and strike when the garrison was again weakened.

General Pienaar was a splendid type of the South African burgher, who not only feared no death himself, but was accompanied by his two grown sons whom he despatched with any scouting expedition which involved a greater hazard than usually fell to this service. Physically he was good to look upon, tall, broad, erect, with open countenance, speaking English fluently, with a friendly appreciation of all the foreign volunteers in the service of his country. For his personal courage and strategy in action, and his tact and courtesy in camp, he deservedly became extremely popular with this branch of the army. Descended from two of the oldest South African families, his was a history resembling that of

many of the older families. His father had been among the " Voortrekkers " (advance pioneers) and had been a commandant and member of the Volksraad in the Orange Free State for the first colony of emigrants. The present general had emigrated to the Transvaal in 1885 where he held government offices and the post of captain of the Johannesburg volunteers. At the presence of war in the fall of 1899, he had left Johannesburg as veldkornet with 500 burghers, capturing the first English train in Natal and taking part in the battle of Elandslaagte under Ben Viljoen. At this battle his two sons Philip and Ernest, seventeen and fifteen years of age both became prisoners, but escaped from the prison camps at Simonstown, Cape Colony, after eight months' captivity. The youngest was recaptured and banished to St. Helena. The elder, after trudging two months and four days, sometimes stealing rides, and in constant hiding, rejoined his father's command at Bronkhorstspruit east of Pretoria, having traveled 1,400 miles from his prison through a country overrun and partially occupied by the enemy.

The general's wife at the capture of Pretoria was detained by the English for a month when she managed to escape, and, alone with her two younger children she drove in a cart to the east in search of her husband, passing through a territory wherein two Kaffir chiefs were at war, and constantly viewing the evidence of this, in the corpses of the slain at the roadside. After eight days of this thrilling experience she succeeded in finding a Boer commando who directed her to her husband's camp at Bronkhorstspruit where she again met her son who had been so long a prisoner. For two days after her arrival she failed to meet Pienaar, but could hear the sounds of the rifles and cannon a few miles to the

south at Witpoortje where the general was fiercely contending the right to this temporary resting place, fortunately with success, and he returned to welcome the wife and children who had dared so much to be once more reunited. After such manner, this war has broken, not one, but all the families of the burghers, yet, with farms destroyed, and property lost, these brave people look forward to a union of all surviving members under happier circumstances and freedom.

Although started in March, the British policy of farm-burning was now in full swing, without concealment. Any excuse, real, absurd, or concocted would be used as justification for leaving women and children destitute on the veldt. An attack on the railroad in the neighborhood of a farm, the discovery of a gun or ammunition on the premises, without which no home was safe from the prowling and lawlessly incited Kaffirs, the alleged harboring of their countrymen or the unaccounted absence of any male member of the family was considered sufficient evidence. In fact no pretense was overlooked and the following proclamation which was soon after withdrawn and modified, supplies an eloquent and incontrovertible testimony of the policy of violence pursued by the invaders against the women and children of burghers defending their country.

V. R.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information that unless the men, at present on commando, belonging to families in the town and district of Krugersdorp, surrender themselves and hand in their arms to the Imperial authorities by the twentieth

MAXIMS CAPTURED ON THE WESTERN BORDER

of July, the whole of their properties will be confiscated and their families turned out destitute and homeless.

By Order.

G. H. M. RITCHIE, Captain K. Horse,
District Superintendent of Police.

KRUGERSDORP, *July Ninth*, 1900.

Perhaps the most revered name among the burghers next to that of their God was Paardekraal. It embodied to them the true interpretation of liberty. In 1877, stung by the unjust taxation of the English, the fathers of the nation had met secretly to deliberate if it were possible to throw off the yoke that galled them. This meeting was held at Paardekraal close to Krugersdorp, and it was then decided that whatever England's might, they would endeavor to gain their independence. To emphasize a solemn oath to this effect every man present was to place a stone in a cairn as a token of his faith, and although their numbers were few each tried to outdo the other in the size of the stone he placed on the heap.

After the war had been fought and won, the spot was perpetuated by a monument, but the rocks, by their numbers and size remained the more eloquent testimonial to all observers. In the latter part of 1899 when war with England seemed again inevitable, a call for a second meeting at this historical spot was issued by the burghers. Many that had placed the original stones answered, surrounded by grown and stalwart sons. While the burghers had increased, so also had the power of England and the situation was gravely discussed. In their simple faith it was once more decided that if God had given them victory before, he would on appeal give them victory

again, and the solemn oath of devotion to country and liberty was renewed. The English have, since their occupation of Krugersdorp, removed all the signs of these sacred rites. Such methods cannot obliterate its glory, for with no visible distinction, it marks the death of some near and dear relative of every family in South Africa, and is therefore impossible to erase. No matter what means are used, the blood would call from the barren earth, the silenced voices would still preach the same gospel.

As chroniclers of military operations, which, up to the present have been, either most inadequately treated, or unreliably reported, we disclaim any intention of entering into any discussion of the sentimental aspect of the war, purely for the sake of sentiment, although there cannot be a doubt of our deep feelings, for we appreciate the fact that war is—war after all, that a measure of injustice to some is unavoidable, violence to a great many inevitable, and discomfort to all a sure consequence. When we have previously called attention to cruelty against the inhabitants of both sexes, and color, by the Imperial authorities and soldiery, and where we shall continue to do so, the object has been twofold. First to draw to the reader a comparison between the Republican farmer, showing the operation of Christianity in war, and the conduct of the Imperials as evidence of the feelings which have prompted their acts. Secondly, to draw out vividly the baleful influence such sweeping violence has had on the struggle, and thereby to illustrate the underlying motives which surround the fierce, unyielding resistance of these moral citizens. Had the British statesmen been such students of human nature as they are wonted to be believed, they would have profited by the revolt of the colonies which culminated in the United

States of America and this war, even aimed at conquest, would have been conducted on different lines or better still, not at all.

Each day has witnessed an increase of violent measures, with corresponding increased resistance, until we now stand in the presence no longer of war as such, but of an inhuman combat where moral existence struggles for life against extermination. However the final results of the contest might now terminate as affecting ownership of land, it is bound to redound to the lasting benefit of mankind, and to nations, as an accumulation of wisdom. The Imperial invaders, sobered and penitent after their drunken fury, will then stand aghast at the mad folly which wrought their ruin, but all humanity will reap the priceless riches bequeathed by the fallen giant, and the once despised Boer will be exalted among men. The Republican farmers of all South Africa,—now no longer the Republics alone,—by the wanton acts of their opponents, became earnestly imbued with the impression that their enemies belong to a lower type of manhood, and that yielding meant abasement for them. All who have followed closely the trend of events, since farm-burning, with accompanying horrors, commenced, will have read this boldly stamped in every phase. Under cover of this quoted sample and similar proclamations, outrages were committed past belief, families, even little girls, suffered terrible indignities at the hands of treacherous Kaffir servants and levies, and women, old and young, were driven through destitution to throw themselves on the tender mercies of the military camps.

On the eighteenth of July Lord Roberts decided to send some of the women and children from Johannesburg to the Boer lines to be fed, notwithstanding that the majority had been abundantly supplied with provisions by

their husbands, fathers and relatives before the evacuation. This emergency arose from the confiscation of privately owned provisions for the British troops, leaving the unfortunate families nothing to subsist on, and few with the means necessary to purchase back from the Imperial stores their own seized produce. Now, in the middle of winter, they were deported to the Boer lines on the veldt, with no other object than to impoverish the resources of the army.

To the number of six hundred they arrived by railroad in Pienaar's poort, but the bridges having been destroyed in the rear of the Republicans at Elands river and Bronkhorstspruit, the Federals were forced to resort to wagons for the transportation of the families to Balmoral. Under cover of this movement, and ignoring a strict agreement to the contrary, the British made a general advance. In the northeast, General Stevenson brushed aside Erasmus, and on July 24, on account of the inadequate defense, the whole northern Federal line was pushed in from Elands river, and the Federals, now hotly pursued by the enemy, and threatened from the south by the cavalry brigades in command of French, were forced as a measure of escape, to hastily retreat to Balmoral.

Hampered by a transport already overtaxed, the Republican retreat from Balmoral was most memorable. Hundreds of wagons of families and household goods, formed miles of an unbroken trek. At night, with the veldt fires to light the road and destroy the grass, this scene made a picture difficult to describe. The enormous, wide, clumsy prairie schooners, lumbering along with their draught of eighteen, twenty and twenty-two oxen of all ages; the old grandfather and grandmother sitting in the fore of the hood; one grown son of perhaps forty, walking alongside, with his ten foot bamboo whip-stock

over his shoulder; the wives and children of the second and third generations gathered in the back of the wagon, exchanging queries with the passing horsemen, or peering anxiously to catch a glimpse of some of their menfolks coming to obtain food, from the incessant fighting in the rear; with grown girls riding their ponies astride, driving a few head of milch cows snatched from the wreck of a home; and indiscriminate bunches of sheep and goats being urged on by the Kaffir servants to keep pace; baskets of chickens and ducks, slung under the wagons; and the housedog running by the side mutely questioning the cause of such unusual things, and every wagon varying but slightly in general make-up, number of stock, and method of locomotion.

Fatigued burghers relieved from duty protecting the rear against the extreme British advance, in their attempt to catch the commissary and satisfy hunger, would ride hour after hour past this apparently endless stream of wagons and stock. Every detail was vividly portrayed in the lurid glare of the burning grass, the flames licking around the dead and dying animals which had fallen by the roadside in their final trek. Now and again the air was rent by the plaintive cry of a dying horse attracting the attention of those nearby to a scene of unspeakable agony and despair, as the poor animal among the flames lifted his head and wistfully looked at his departing friends, who in compassion ended his suffering by a timely bullet and the spirit departed of another friend of man.

The riding burghers encountered the anxious gaze and inquiry of wives and mothers, eager for news of kindred, or listened to the lighter-hearted singing hymns and popular songs in English to the accompaniment of cracking whips and gruff shouts to the oxen, to be broken only

long enough to ascertain the nearness of the enemy, or momentarily watch the flash of the cannon in the distant rear. And with such a scene before them the burghers inwardly determined as they hurried past intent on breaking a long fast, that these simple, liberty-loving women folks of theirs, so cheerfully bearing their share of the discomfort, beyond all fear of death or personal loss, should secure, God willing, the independence they craved.

Mile by mile, winding in and out, this enormous trek followed the road, until they arrived in safety at Middleburg on the twenty-seventh, making only short halts at the watering places to rest their stock and cook their food. Then the families began to separate, and in parties with their stock sought refuge in the *bushveldt* to the north, where they were free from immediate further annoyance or possibility of being followed, as it was a country bountifully covered with grass and protected by a thick undergrowth of bushes, which made the operations of an invading force extremely hazardous, and easily repulsed by a few daring and active foes. There was nothing further to fear except a famine in flour, as game was here abundant, and they penetrated the jungle until their trail was lost, when they made kraals for their stock and went into laager to await the course of events.

The extreme rear of this trek was formed by the Long Tom siege gun which had, on account of its weight, been dragging behind on the continual eve of capture, sometimes with a guard, more often without. The youthful light-hearted artillerymen drove the oxen with their horses conveniently saddled, to allow their individual escape, if necessary, but determined to bring in the gun if untiring energy and unswerving obedience to duty would accomplish it.

In a despairing war such incidents as these long treks

were not without their bright spots. The fortitude and resignation of all, with the absence of oaths or abuse was always noticeable and pleasing. Without any apparent flurry the male guard would walk by his oxen, cracking his whip, exchanging a good word with a passing horseman, or conversing with the grandad in the front. He would cheerfully assist other wagons in distress by the loan of his own team, and would be always willing to lend his personal labor. The laziest and most obstinate ox in the team would invariably be named " Englishman " and if there was a black ox equally useless, they named it " Kaffir." These two would be inspanned together to add to " Englishman's " humiliation and the Boer's sense of humor. Riding by the team a guttural sound would suddenly burst forth " En—gle—e-s-m-a-a-n! " as the long rawhide lash sang through the air and descended with a welt on " Englishman," who with a mighty jerk would strain on the yoke, intent on pulling the entire load. A moment later by reason of " Englishman's " suddenly inspired energy, " Kaffir " would call for similar attentions, when " Englishman " would hang back right away, and concede precedence to " Kaffir " now extremely anxious to bear his portion of the burden.

After forming laager the oxen would be cared for, the food cooked, experiences exchanged, and their evening devotions held within plain view of the hundreds of tiny fires which denoted the English camp, all being done with an easy carelessness and confidence sublimely fascinating. With perfect freedom they would lie down in the laagers and sleep soundly without pickets or thought of danger, until two or three o'clock, when all was again activity. Inspanning quickly and quietly they proceeded to place ten miles between themselves and the inevitable daylight advance of their enemies.

On the evening of the twenty-seventh, all transport, except the heavy siege-gun and a few crippled wagons reached Middleburg, and the following morning the majority of burghers passed on through, leaving such families and members of different commands as needed food and supplies to restock from the government stores, where provisions were given to whomever would carry them away. The town lying in an open valley was utterly incapable of defense, and its abandonment by its inhabitants was already begun. Some sadly needed undergarments were obtained here, but boots and shoes, the most desired commodity, were eagerly but fruitlessly sought, the supply at the command of the Republics having been completely exhausted.

The progress of the enemy had not been overlooked, and the railroad bridges carefully destroyed to further embarrass them. Early in the afternoon of the arrival in town, a cloud of mist arose growing in density until it became a penetrating rain. The high altitude and the open country made the air bitterly cold and discomforting. The pickets by order of the generals were withdrawn to the town, no guards remained on duty, and Long Tom was temporarily forsaken on the open veldt by all excepting the crew who manfully stayed at the post. The cold was so intense, the weather so terrible that the horses either broke loose from their fastenings or died in their tracks. The British, within a few miles, had out-traveled their transport, and as a result, many of their troops died of exposure, besides reporting a loss of 3,000 transport animals on this night and in the rapid march preceding it. By the early dawn, we who had found a welcome roof, under which, although supperless, we had snatched some sleep with gratitude for the escape from the storm, now prowled around like ravenous

TYPES OF BURGHERS

wolves after supplies of coffee and raw meat from which to improvise a hurried meal.

The siege gun arrived at eight and was followed by a few wagons in every degree of distress, which were drawn by mixed teams of donkeys, horses, oxen and mules. Not a single wagon was lost on this famous trek, although the more dilapidated ones with the siege gun camped for four nights within sight of the enemy's picket-fires, and escaped only by obtaining a few hours' start in the mornings. The wagons hurrying through to the east presented a peculiar appearance as they wound their way in long dark lines over the undulating country. With the roads heavy, and the loads increased by the saturated condition, the progress was slow, and they were visible for miles to the English advancing from the west.

Led by General Pienaar, commanding the Johannesburgers, a few burghers whose fallen spirits had revived with the first promise of sunshine, in an effort to delay the enemy's advance and give the overdone transport a few miles start, took up positions on the strategic points in the hills to the west. The panorama, though despairing, was a magnificent one, the entire British movement being visible for miles, with the long surreptitious arm of cavalry to the south making the inevitable flanking movement, designed to steal a march and cut off our retreat to the east. As the mist lifted, the sun came forth, imparting warmth and cheer, to the toilers. Few traces of the rain were left at twelve o'clock. Indeed, such is the nature of this country, that shortly after noon, the wagon-train became marked by miles of dust, like the smoke of a great prairie fire, rising from a circuitous course through the low hills and floating in a dense bank to leeward, enveloping everything, and rendering individual objects invisible.

The enemy, bringing up their guns, shelled our outpost, which had succeeded thus far in checking all that had advanced against them by carefully observing every separate movement, and meeting them at the threatened spot with the entire force at command. This continued until exhausted horses and the galling artillery fire in the exposed positions compelled us to fall back in the afternoon on the town, with the intention of defending the wagon bridge over the Oliphant river, which formed the only exit east; until word could arrive that the camps had reached Pan in safety. When this event became known, many, after partaking of some refreshment, at the village hotel as a farewell, followed the camp to get a little required rest, while others staid behind until night, with the intention of exchanging a few parting shots with the enemy when they advanced to occupy the town. They had their wishes gratified with the running skirmish which developed after dark in the streets, and firing as they went, they leisurely retreated across the bridge, leaving the British in possession.

Chapter XV

Belfast—A brief respite—Prinsloo's surrender—Scarcity of horses—Infantry corps—More proclamations—More women deported—Cordua executed—Two worlds—Dalmanutha—The police—The South African Republic proclaimed—Council of war—Prayer.

ANOTHER disaster was averted in this latest retreat. The enemy was simply outmarched, notwithstanding his vastly superior resources, and while two days later, he followed us to Pan station, twenty miles further, our main column was already recuperating at Belfast, with outposts at Wonderfontein. Twenty days' respite ensued, only interrupted by the exchange of courtesies between the opposing scouts and pickets, during which time the British army welcomed a rest while waiting on Buller, now once more in trouble with Chris Botha, who had again invaded Natal, destroying the railroad where he could, interrupting the communication, and causing general embarrassment to the enemy. Finally the ill-starred English commander came up, and in the meanwhile Lord Roberts was busy depopulating Middleburg of women and children, tearing them from their homes and sources of supply, forcing them frequently with only what they stood in, to join the colony of reconcentrados at the camps in Johannesburg, where naturally they became a public charge. Their abundant provisions were seized and the British unctuously applauded themselves for their philanthropy in feeding the wives and children of the men who continued to oppose them.

In spite of the Hague convention and previous proclamation, no respect was paid to personal property, but

families were driven from their farms like cattle, the stock appropriated and the houses destroyed by fire, and such walls as withstood the flames by dynamite. The flood of devastation was rising and there was no power to dispute its authority. Every protest or remonstrance only increased the tide of its wrath, and resulted in a still greater torrent until it spent itself in these tongues of flame, which sent its tale of anguish heavenward, and left the charred and blackened country in its train.

The government of the Republics from ordinary motives of precaution and comfort, was at this stage installed in the cars of a special train, at Machadodorp, from where they began to reorganize their defenses. The broken and mountainous country now occupied, renewed the confidence and determination to contend every advantage. President Steyn, coming through the British lines from the Orange Free State, to consult with President Kruger, brought with him an installment of thirty-five Canadian prisoners, captured at Greylinstaad by General De Wet, which number, added to those already at Nooitgedacht and the additions from General De la Rey and De Wet, had steadily increased the original 900 brought from Pretoria, to a strength of 1,800.

News of De Wet's and De la Rey's successes were constantly reported, which inspired the army of 3,000 men at Belfast with courage. Communications with these distant forces were complete, men going to De la Rey in the northwest through the *bushveldt,* or southwest to the Free State, through Standerton, without hindrance or interruption. The intelligence of Commandant Prinsloo's surrender in the Free State, on July the thirtieth, cast a temporary gloom over the Republicans, but that was dispelled by a report from De Wet, that General Oliver had escaped, and that the force surrendered had

been culled a few days previously by De Wet, who, with the picked men were in safety. Those who became prisoners, he had regarded as so much impedimenta, and they had been abandoned to their fate. As this may sound paradoxical, it must be explained that the burgher armies, embodying as they did, practically an entire population of males of all ages, and in every condition of health and constitution, had been hampered from the outset by quite a large number of men totally unfit for field service, corresponding to the coffee coolers of the American civil war. Many of these men were cripples, others old and feeble, while numbers had become war-worn and despairing of ultimate success. There is no doubt that De Wet considered that they hampered the mobility, and possibly the spirit of such a campaign as he knew it was necessary to wage, and with this idea in view he had practically left them to work out their own redemption, choosing the more ambitious for his personal following.

The most trying difficulty of the war was now keenly felt in the scarcity of horses. Many burghers, in the retreat through the Free State and east of Pretoria had lost their mounts and arrived in Machadodorp on foot. The supply would not meet the demand, necessitating all available brood stock over two years of age being impressed into service and thereby, to some extent, filling the gap, but in no way overcoming the problem, owing to the constant death-rate among the horses already in use. The government endeavored to organize both the dismounted burghers and volunteers in infantry corps, and the burghers received orders to join the commands in their separate districts, and the volunteers of different nationalities were placed under the command of Dr. Krieger, a German medico of the Carolina district. Neither burghers nor volunteers were satisfied, however,

as, in these days of rapid movement, persons on foot were at great disadvantage. The method of fighting was against the system, for the Republicans held a position until a further defense foretold serious loss, when they left trusting to mobility to outdistance the enemy. This of course, could not fail to make certain victims of those dismounted, and as a natural consequence they declined to take the chances involved, preferring to form separate camps close to the railroad, and use that medium of escape in case of necessity.

By the adoption of the second alternative, a useless corps came into being, which, unable to help themselves, received little aid from the government, and only burdened the resources of the commissary in forwarding supplies to the fighting lines. The greater proportion were foreigners, unable to keep horses if they were obtained, in a country where horse flesh was at such a premium that many were willing to risk moral disintegration to effect the loan of an animal to tide over present necessities. The problem was solved only later by the dismounted body crossing the Portuguese border and taking refuge on neutral territory, relieving the Republics of the burden of their protection and keep, and releasing the mounted men to more mobile action.

On August 11, Lord Roberts issued another proclamation revoking earlier proclamations which promised immunity to burghers who had already taken the oath of neutrality, or had remained on their farms as non-combatants, and declared his intention of burning and destroying farms as a measure of retaliation. This meant that burghers who had yielded under previous proclamations were to be transported, their wives and children placed in reconcentrado camps, and their farms destroyed and stock confiscated in any district in which an alleged

outrage (really a legitimate act of warfare) was committed against the British troops.

By an ingenious method of running telegraph wires upon the long strings of fences, and underground, the Republicans at Machadodorp still had perfect communication with De Wet in the Heilbron district of the Orange Free State. By this clever piece of strategy, we were enabled to dispense with messengers to the mystification of the British, who marveled at the prompt news service so much in evidence.

General Buller, having succeeded in establishing the Durban communication, pushed in the Republican forces at Bethel, and again inflicted a reverse to the Ermalo and Carolina commandos at Carolina. On the fifteenth he was thereby enabled to make a junction with General French at Wonderfontein, which increased the force already threatening the Republicans at Belfast, by 40,000 men.

On August 18, Lord Roberts decided to move out more of the Boer women,—"because their men were fighting against the English," was the reason given. He might have added,—to embarrass the enemy on the eve of an attack, and if British military communications had truthfully conveyed the real intention, it is safe to predict that this would have been the only one given. These women and children arrived at Belfast in open trucks, after two days' exposure in fearful weather, traveling during the night to prevent their seeing the extent of the British defenses, besides being side-tracked for every army transport moving forward. The nights were bitterly cold, and as many of the unfortunates had no relatives with the army, their men having already been killed or captured, the government had to be appealed to, for shelter and food.

Their escort consisted of English officers, who, with refreshing impudence, during their brief sojourn within our lines, appeared to enjoy the now peculiarly British pastime of distributing handbills among the burghers, upon which were printed their commander's latest endeavor to end the war by proclamation. This grotesque performance so delighted the recipients, who were at last beginning to appreciate British humor, that had General Ben Viljoen not ordered the visitors to desist, their stock in trade would have been very soon depleted.

An attempt to kidnap Roberts in Pretoria resulted in the trial and execution by shooting of young Lieutenant Cordua of the States-Artillery, who had been taken at Pretoria and paroled. The ex-burgher detectives, reduced to act as British secret agents, to maintain their liberty and credit with their new masters, had become "Agents Provocateurs," lodging complaints of any one against whom they had a personal grievance during the Republican régime. Among these was one Gano, a naturalized American, known in Brooklyn, U. S. A., as a "bad character." He approached several Americans and Afrikanders, well known to sympathize with the Republicans, who had remained on sufferance in the Capitol to insure the safety of their property, with proposals for kidnapping the British Commander-in-Chief. Failing, however, to influence any of these, he resorted to other measures, and Cordua, a young man of twenty-three, brave and imaginative, careless but enthusiastic, and somewhat inclined toward wine, was the victim. Working on the peculiar qualities of his character, particularly the first and the last, Gano kept him in a continually irresponsible condition of semi-intoxication, and trapped him into a clumsy plot conceived entirely by the British agent who supplied the Imperial uniform and

arms, in and with which, Cordua was captured in Gano's company, while proceeding to an imaginary rendezvous. Tried before a military court he was sentenced to death on August 16, and the judgment confirmed by Lord Roberts on August 23. Three days later at daylight, he faced a firing party with eyes unbound, and meeting death unflinchingly, he uttered as his last words: That "he was paying the penalty of failure." In his final utterance he displayed the youthful imagination which formed one of the agents of his ruin. This murder was the more unjustifiable when compared with the extraordinarily lenient treatment shown to all spies and traitors in the British service, who fell into Republican hands. There has never been an instance of one of these being even injured, much less shot, until very recently. The execution of this youth has been placed outside the pale of defense by Lord Roberts' own assurance to the war office, that the "plot was clumsy," and that "he was never really threatened."

On August 22, we learned that the late Boer officials in the towns of Zeerust, Rustenburg and Klerksdorp, west of Pretoria, had been again reinstated in their respective offices by the Republicans recapturing these places. We also had news that a severe fight had occurred between the Federals under General Grobler, and Baden-Powell, north of Pretoria, in which the Boers were again victorious.

On the twenty-third, Buller, taking the south flank, advanced to a point fifteen miles south of Belfast, which town had been occupied by French with little opposition. The Federals moving to a low broken range of hills, within rifle range of the burg, which range, with an altitude 6,557 feet, constituted the highest point in the Transvaal. A beacon on the greatest eminence indicated this

fact and occupied the centre of a scene bitterly contested during the following days.

From this ridge, as though forming a dividing wall between the opposing forces, a view could be obtained of two distinct landscapes, drawn by lines so sharp and contrasting that they resembled two separate worlds. Toward Belfast and the surrounding table-land, to the west and south, the country sloped gently away as far as the eye could reach, relieved only by gradual undulations, and covered by a black and barren expanse of burnt prairie. To the east from the same point of observation the decline was rapid, and broken by cañons, ravines and sharp torn foothills, clustering around and clinging to a number of rugged mountains, of great height and majesty, yet beneath the observer, with here and there a white farm dwelling and green patch, nestling in the embrace of a crevice forming a brilliant spot of color amongst the red-brown landscape. Surrounding the distant mountains and yet still beneath, was a grey-blue sky that gave the impression that the vision had reached the great infinite beyond and it was empty. This ridge constituted a great backbone, dividing two countries of entirely opposite nature. Warmth from cold, fever from health, rank, semi-tropical vegetation from a bare, treeless veldt and buffalo grass. Glancing toward the west, the mind dwelt on exposed camps and flanking movements impossible to check, while to the east was a broken territory, capable of endless defense, with swift, certain raids on convoys extended over difficult passes. Hopes arose, of harassing an enemy on chosen ground, adapted to defense by the few against the many, and the burgher felt cheered by the thought that at last the contest would be less unequal. Bravery, marksmanship, and individual strategy would offset the advantage of over-

whelming numbers, now grown wearisome, and with renewed confidence they were prepared to contest every inch.

On the lines of the Republican defense, the open flat in the cañon, through which the railroad passed, was held by the Johannesburg Police. To the south, and distant about 400 yards from them, was Commandant Gravett, who in turn was supported on his left by the Ermelo and Carolina commandos. To the north in consecutive order were the Krugersdorp, Johannesburg, Middleburg, Boksburg, and Lydenburg commands embodying the entire Republican army of 4,000 men, extended along a fighting line of forty miles. Obviously they could not offer a very effectual resistance to the enemy, provided any certain point was singled for the attack, and backed by 40,000 men and 120 guns.

On August 23, in the south, Buller, essaying to feel his position, got two companies of a Liverpool regiment surrounded, and decimated with a loss of 110 of the total. Two days later, the British made a general advance and tried to force the south wing but failed. They then transferred their attention to the north wing and succeeded on forcing back the Federals nearly a mile, but with fearful loss to themselves. On the following day another movement was checked when the enemy's guns in their centre became isolated, and the troops compelled to retreat, but this was no further advantage to the Federals, who were unable to effect a capture of the abandoned guns. The weather, although clear, was bitterly cold, the winds being most penetrating, and the troops, with the constant night-work, suffered considerably.

On August 27 the attack was once more renewed on the north, and the small army of 4,000 burghers rein-

forced the positions to the utmost of their power. This manœuvre was found to be a feint, and Buller, advancing the centre along the railroad, stormed the police position at Bergendal, where seventy-five police, with a Pom-pom withstood the tremendous fire of six batteries with siege guns for four hours, gallantly shooting back every attempt to carry their position by storm, until their loose dirt intrenchment had been swept level with the ground by the fearful hail of shrapnel. With exhausted ammunition and a loss of thirty per cent of their number, among whom was Commandant Ousthuizen, and all their officers, these men having stood and shot until within reach of the enemy's bayonets, were compelled to retreat across a flat a mile in width. All attempts to bring up horses for removing the maxim were futile and that, too, was lost. In the meantime, Commandant Gravett of the Krugersdorp commando on both flanks of the brave police, by reason of the open flats between, was unable to assist them, and the burghers became spectators of the unequal combat, sullenly wondering how much longer this heroic resistance could be continued, until it almost came as a positive relief when the police broke. At a glance it could be seen that the positions along the entire line were now lost, through the centre being forced, and without unnecessary orders the stream of burghers commenced to converge toward Dalmanutha, leaving only the more daring behind, who became fascinated with the progress of the remaining forty police across the fire-swept plain. The storm of iron and lead was such, that it seemed impossible for a blade of grass to escape yet the few struggled across at various paces of weariness, and finally found refuge behind the Federal siege gun, two miles in the rear of their disaster.

The only channel whereby horses could travel to es-

LYDDITE SHELL BURSTING BEFORE A BOER GUN

cape from the many other positions, was along the numerous converging cañons, leading into the one the British had already forced a hold upon. Exciting races of men and guns ensued, all straining every nerve to reach the open road, and cross the zone of fire before the enemy could block the opportunity. Except the Pom-pom captured from the police, all the artillery escaped, and but for the loss of a very few men, knocked off their horses by shell fire during the flight, the police sustained the majority of the casualties in the four days' continuous fighting, which cost the British over 400 in killed and wounded. It was thought the advantage in numbers had been discounted, but as these successive engagements progressed, the weight of the enemy grew so menacing, that it became obvious that sooner or later, from sheer exhaustion, we would be forced to yield the positions. It was a lucky escape for men and guns, and by taking time by the forelock even the wagons were saved, as the laagers had been started before daylight the same morning. Seizing the advantage offered by a chain of hills in the direction of Machadodorp, the Republicans retired with their artillery east and northeast, on a wagonroad leading to Waterval, where the government, prompted by a natural anxiety for the safety of the president, had already moved the Capitol, now on wheels, which precaution the British gave ample reason for by successfully dynamiting a railroad culvert east of the town.

In consideration of the blow suffered by the invaluable Police, small comfort was drawn during the retreat from the news which was received, that Danie Theron, at the head of 250 men, had again destroyed the railroad southwest of Krugersdorp, and inflicted injuries, and that De Wet had escaped from the cordons striving to surround him. The fortunes of the Republicans in the Orange

Free State were not so bright. General Oliver was surrounded and taken prisoner near Winburg, while attempting to effect the capture of that town, by which disaster the Republicans lost a brave and capable leader.

Hotly pursued to Waterval, the Federals fought continuous rear-guard actions and succeeded in covering the retreat of all their transport. The siege gun, as usual at the end, narrowly escaped capture on several occasions, and was the cause of many affairs of minor importance.

The arrival of Lord Roberts at Machadodorp, which like Pretoria, was undefended, was the occasion for a proclamation by him on September 1, annexing the South African Republic to the Empire, under the designation of the Transvaal Territory. This notwithstanding, he effectually occupied less than one-third of the country claimed, and was opposed by more than two-thirds of the Republican citizens who took the field at the beginning of the war. While on the line of retreat we destroyed the cog-road, which ascended from Watervalonder, to a tunnel passing through the mountain to Watervalboven. The engine employed in hauling trains up this steep incline of about 4,000 feet in length, suffered the same fate, and in that manner the probable main feeder of the British army was temporarily rendered useless in the event of rapid pursuit.

Affairs had reached such a climax that decisive steps for the future became imperative, and a council of war of civil and military leaders resulted. Grave men and stolid veterans bared their heads in invoking a blessing from the Divine Ruler on their deliberations. Then a lengthy discussion followed, and it was decided that the last combined effort to hold a line of defense had been made, and that the only hope left was in mobile columns,

so distributed as to be possible of concentration on short notice and whenever circumstances warranted. Lastly the government was to remove to Nelspruit, while Botha with 1,500 men and a siege gun, was to fall back on Lydenburg, and General Ben Viljoen, with all the dismounted men and impedimenta were to follow the railroad to Nooitgedacht, and release the 2,000 prisoners held there. A most impressive chapter in South African history was closed by a prayer to the "God of the People, that He do not turn His face away in their darkest hour of sore need, that in Him their fidelity would rest unshaken, and that for freedom, His most priceless of gifts, they would patiently struggle, until, in His own good time, as He had always done, He would vouchsafe His blessings to them."

Chapter XVI

Ben Viljoen—Prisoners released—White flags again—Ambulance scouts—Lord Roberts' letter—Botha's answer—The army reorganized—Spitz Kop—Barberton—Fever—Crocodile Poort—President and burghers—The foreign attachés leave Reitz—Artillery destroyed—Last of Long Tom—J. N. King, Dynamite Dick—Komati Poort—The president in Marseilles—De la Rey—Lord Roberts departs.

OF the prominent actors on the Republican side, none can be said to have achieved greater well-merited notoriety than General Ben Viljoen. Although he might be cited as a direct contrast to Boer conservatism,—an element at least hitherto found necessary to attract recognition,—his has been a meteoric career, and unless the unexpected happens, every indication seems to point him out as one of the great leaders of the Afrikander people in the future. To convey an idea of his extraordinary rise it will only be necessary to relate that six years before the outbreak of hostilities, he arrived on the Goldfields, Johannesburg, and found employment as a patrolman in the Johannesburg foot police. A short while after he was promoted to the mounted police, then commissioned an officer of the same body. His resignation was followed by election to the Volksraad as representative for Johannesburg, and as such he was a vigorous champion of the "no surrender" policy. In the exciting times preceding this war he stood in the fore-front of the Republicans, and as a consequence was prominent in many exciting affairs with the ultra-Jingo Imperialists of the league party. General Viljoen looks the fighter he is. Broad, thick-set, below medium height, he has a light complexion, eyes, and

GENERAL BEN VILJOEN

wavy hair, with a fine mouth, clean-cut, which the owner is given to bringing together with a snap. On the surface he appears genial, and not unfrequently leaves the observer with that impression, but he can be quite irritable and quick-tempered without warning. At the outset of the war he was traduced by enemies, but they have since shrunk into oblivion. He is quick to recognize and appreciate the merits in a friend, just as he makes the very worst kind of enemy.

General Viljoen, with his characteristic energy at once started to execute his mission, and passing down the Crocodile River Cañon, he fought a rear guard action at Helvetia, falling back on Nooitgedacht. The temperature here formed a pleasant contrast to that of Belfast, and the men made haste to discard all unnecessary blankets, which gave their horses a well-deserved rest.

A rumor that the government intended to ship the prisoners to Barberton reached the ears of the British officers confined in a separate but adjacent camp to that occupied by the bulk of the prisoners. Then it became known that it was intended that only the officers should be sent to Barberton and the rank and file released to rejoin their people. Some of the officers foiled this intention in part, by hiding themselves among the privates, and as no one identified them, they escaped with the rest. The announcement of the release was made by General Viljoen, in a dignified and conservative speech, and they were cautioned to keep to the road, avoid looting, and not to straggle, to prevent a possible mistake by our outpost. On conclusion there was an outburst of cheering, followed by three cheers for the general, and a great crowd gathered around him, anxious to shake his hand as he sat on his horse among them. After another round of cheers, the men—many of whom had been confined a

year and over, started up the cañon, carrying everything they possessed in blankets, food and cooking utensils, but soon realizing the task of walking to the British lines, they discarded as they went along, according to their various stages of weariness, all but the barest necessities, until the road was literally strewn with blankets, pots, pans, sacks of coffee, rice, etc.

At nightfall a few of Irish origin returned, and begged permission to shoulder a rifle for the Republican cause, against what they argued was their hereditary enemy. They were accepted, after some indecision, armed, and placed under Uitlander officers, who were required to vouch for them. The responsibility was cheerfully taken, it being generally agreed that any one willing to take the chances of a deserter, at this late stage of the game, would be hardly likely to act treacherously to his adopted cause in apparently such desperate straits. While holding Nooitgedacht, the Republicans tried to communicate with the British commander by means of a white flag, in regard to the prisoners then being released, so that they should be received and not fired on by their own people. Two burghers were despatched up the cañon with the message, but although displaying the white sheet they carried, they were fired upon as soon as they came within range of the British pickets at Watervalonder. One of the horses was killed, and they took cover behind a rock, exposing the flag until firing ceased, when they advanced and delivered the message, narrowly missing being detained themselves. The officer in command, when remonstrated with for his conduct, asserted, apparently on his own authority, that the British no longer recognized a flag of truce, or the Boers as combatants. Naturally from then on there was a diffidence of volunteering for this dangerous duty, which, under

the rules of war necessitated the bearer going unarmed on his mission, and the opportunity of carrying the protest of General Viljoen against this action, was not eagerly sought. Finally, Richard Hunt, an American lieutenant with the Boer army, offered his services, with the full knowledge of the antipathy with which English-speaking members of the Boer forces were regarded by the enemy. The thought of being shot while unarmed is naturally very distasteful, even to a soldier, and we were relieved when he returned to us, with an apology from the general in command, for the previous incident, and a promise to punish the offending officer, but Hunt fully satisfied himself, in his brief acquaintance with the members of Kitchener's Horse, that the fate of an Uitlander volunteer with the Republicans, who fell into their hands, would be decided a good deal according to the method and publicity with which he arrived there.

Upon the release of the prisoners, the main army dropped back down the cañon to Godwan's River, a knowledge most necessary for the English not to possess. It was the intention of the government to transfer to the British lines some of the fever patients and convalescent prisoners, to enable them to reach their friends, but it was not desirable that the enemy should bring into the town their ambulances and discover the undefended state it was in. There was therefore some surprise, when on the second day, six fully equipped ambulances rolled into the burg. General Viljoen was in a dilemma as to what he should do, but as the ambulances were before the fighting lines, he was perfectly justified in his consequent action, namely, appropriating the entire outfit for the benefit of the burghers. We have before remarked upon the use of ambulances, and there is no law of war that could justify them in acting as an advance guard through

a country most difficult to scout, and we were all satisfied with the decision that the train was lawfully seized.

From Watervalonder to Godwan River Station, the railroad and wagon road ran down a cañon 400 feet deep with no other means of egress, except for horsemen, than each end of this tremendous declivity tumbling down toward the sea. It had tributary to it many subsidiary cañons of similar character, which made effectual hostilities from the plains it intersected impossible, on account of the ravines which had to be headed, the absence of cover, and danger of being cut off, that such positions would offer. Consequently the Boers felt very confident of repelling any advance on the direct road, although they did not desire ambulances to scout it, and only feared a flanking movement by Barberton or Lydenburg.

On September 2, Lord Roberts addressed a communication to General Botha, in which he denied the existence of organized resistance except by the army commanded by Botha, declared his intention to destroy farms and confiscate stock in districts where any act of aggression was made, and threatened to transport from Pretoria and Johannesburg all women, including Mrs. Kruger, and Mrs. Botha, to the Republican lines, because as he alleged, the women were transmitting information to their people. Four days later, General Botha sent the following reply, which is reprinted *verbatim,* and the dignity of which speaks for itself.

COMMANDANT-GENERAL'S CAMP, *September* 6, 1900.

TO LORD ROBERTS, *Field Marshal, Commander-in-Chief, of the British troops in South Africa:*

YOUR EXCELLENCY—In reply to your Excellency's letter of the 2nd inst., I have the honor to state the following:

Inasmuch as our entire armed force is only a small one in comparison with that of your Excellency, it cannot, of course be expected that strong commandos should be in the field everywhere, and it naturally follows that now, as during the war, what is incumbent upon us must be done by small forces. Moreover we have been compelled to still further scatter our commandos in order to be able to check the looting patrols under your Excellency's chief command, who scour the country to carry off cattle and provisions from the different farms.

2. As regards your contention that, with the exception of the burgher forces under my command, no other Boer forces should be in existence, I most strongly deny this, since our armed forces are still disposed and directed in the same manner as in the beginning of the war, and in accordance with the country's laws.

3. In paragraph 3 of your letter, with which I am now dealing, it is already known to me that barbarous actions of this kind are committed by your troops under your command, not only alongside or near the railway, but also in places far removed from railways. Wherever your troops move, not only are houses burned down or blown up with dynamite, but defenseless women and children are ejected, robbed of all food and cover, and all this without any just cause existing for such proceedings.

4. With regard to paragraph 4 of your Excellency's letter, I extremely regret to learn that my burghers' and my own determination to persevere in the struggle for our independence, is to be visited on our wives and children, and this is the first instance of this kind known to me, in the history of civilized warfare. I can only protest against your proposed measures as being in opposition to all principles of civilized warfare, and exces-

sively cruel toward the women and children, cruel especially toward elderly women, and above all toward the wife of his Honor, the President of the state, who as you must be well aware, is not able to travel without risk to her life, so that it would be simply murder to compel her to take such a journey. The pretext alleged by you, viz.: that by so doing your Excellency desires to protect yourself, against transmission of information to us, clearly lacks all substance, since such proceedings were not considered necessary at a time when our troops were encamped in the immediate neighborhood of Pretoria. It is needless to state that we have never, by means of women and children, received information regarding operations of war.

5. If your Excellency still intends to persevere in carrying out your Excellency's plans, which I hope will not be the case, I request your Excellency to give me timely notice of the period and particulars of the expulsion, as I wish to arrange for the direct transport of the families to Europe. With regard to your Excellency's remark about proper accommodation, I am prepared to send proper carriages to a place to be indicated, and also, if required, a Cog-wheel engine, for the track between Watervalboven and Watervalonder, provided that your Excellency guarantees the safe return of such carriages and engine.

6. In conclusion, I desire to give you the assurance that nothing you may do to our women and children, will deter us in continuing the struggle for our independence.

I have the honor to be, etc.

LOUIS BOTHA, *Commandant-General.*

This kind of warfare could be characterized as anything but chivalrous, but the burghers, although familiar

with this correspondence, accustomed as they were to burnt homesteads, barely made comment.

At Godwan River Station, with advance posts at Nooitgedacht, the government issued orders for reorganization of the army on a financial basis, the veldkornets being limited from 100 to 200 men, the commandants from 300 to 500. Every man was listed to draw pay, for the first time during the war, at the rate of five shillings a day, seven pounds to be paid every two months, the balance of four pounds ten shillings per month, at the end of the war. Each general, commandant, veldkornet and corporal was expected to return weekly reports regarding the health, absence, etc., of his command.

The burghers resented this as a limitation to their independence, and the foreigners refused it because it put a price on their services, heretofore given freely, and rendered for no pecuniary recompense, but it had the advantage of reducing the numberless officers who were without commands, and free lances which were never available when anything was doing. Many prominent officers had seen their entire command shrink from them, but still held court in petty state while others did duty. This was a most galling condition to the active members of an overworked force.

On September 7, the enemy under French attacked Botha at Spitz Kop, close to Lydenburg. He drove the Republicans from their positions and destroyed 5,000,000 rounds of Martini ammunition, which had been stored, rather to prevent its capture, than for any ultimate use, as the Martini-Henri rifle had been entirely discarded. Simultaneously the enemy advanced south of the railroad, on the Carolina-Barberton road, and with frequent sharp skirmishes forced in the defense. The centre, under Vil-

joen, who had withstood all attacks, with these two arms encircling them, were forced to fall back on Nelspruit to prevent their retreat being intercepted. Falling back through the Duivel's Kantoor, a fearfully rough road, they reached Nelspruit just before the victorious column from Lydenburg, in an endeavor to cut them off from the north.

The British entered Barberton September 13, without opposition, and captured forty-three locomotives with rolling stock. The town officials, of English origin, although burghers, were known to be traitors to their country, working for the advantage of the enemy, and instead of leaving the country at the outbreak of the war, had stayed and administered their offices in this interest, culminating in the capture of so much rolling stock and stores. The town was simply a hotbed of discontent and sedition, and had the distinction of being the only one in the Republics which failed to send an organized commando into the field.

Barberton is known as the early gold-mining district of the Transvaal, and most of the burghers had attained their citizenship in 1883, when one year's residence was sufficient to naturalize anyone wishing to adopt the country. In the controversy leading to the Jameson raid, it was clearly proven to what abuse this law could be put, and it was revoked in favor of the other extreme, called the "fourteen-year franchise." The most influential official of the government, said personally to one of the authors, that the conduct of these same officials of Barberton during the course of the raid, justified their action in refusing a franchise to those so willing to forget their obligations, and gave the government a solid foundation on which to base their judgment, and the present incident still further proved it.

Trekking down to the Crocodile Poort, the wagons were abandoned and everybody took the train over this impracticable pass for horses to Hectorspruit, where they struck the low, flat, fever country of the Crocodile river, the whole terrain of which was covered by a scrub bush of camel-thorn from eight to ten feet high, varied by small trees twelve to fifteen feet high, of acacia, creating a density that rendered any object invisible a hundred yards from the rider.

Hectorspruit was a small hamlet in the centre of the fever belt, and beyond the railroad servants, the native officials, and hunters, few cared to court the chances of anything more than a hurried passage through this territory. From Avoca to the seacoast, we state without exaggeration, the land became a graveyard to would-be residents. Wayside stations had as many as twelve consecutive operators in the twelve months, the eleven either resting under mounds in the garden, or invalided to other climates in a state of ruined health. Hunting parties in search of a few days' sport among the big game (lions, hippopotami and antelope being plentiful), have been known to be lost beyond trace, or possibly one or two surviving members would straggle back to the railroad, wrecks in mind and body. With such conditions, it is needless to say, a prolonged sojourn was not anticipated by the Republican army, although these men were somewhat acclimated. The effect on the raw invaders bred to a city life, trying to oust these forces, may be imagined.

J. N. King, the American detailed in charge of the dynamite, left Crocodile Poort Station with the last train. The railroad, as it passed down the cañon, was a splendid sample of engineering, and as the roadbed, blasted in the solid, grey, sand rock, wound around the

edge of precipices the train seemed to be clinging to its slight hold on the face of the cliff. The passage through the cañon is about eight miles in length, with a very steep grade, and King found many opportunities to use his explosives to good effect, in two places sending the entire roadway down the mountain side, leaving no sign except the hanging rails, of a former possible passage for a train. From there he descended to Avoca, where in spite of the English being in possession of Barberton, he took his train up the branch line, to within four miles of that town, and systematically destroyed every bridge, culvert, station-house and car, on the road, as he fell back on Hectorspruit.

The Republican forces were rejoined at Hectorspruit by Botha from the north, and the columns from Barberton, when a Krygsraad was called and it was decided that the state president on account of his great age, preventing him from riding, should proceed to Europe on a six months' leave of absence, and General Schalk Burger, was appointed acting state president in his stead.

This was in accord with the wishes of the burghers, who feared that the presence of the president would make a centre of attack, with possible disaster. The president was slow to admit of this reasoning and wished to remain, until he was convinced it was for the benefit of the state that he should leave. If he had remained it would have forced Louis Botha to constantly act on the defensive. Such is the veneration with which the president is regarded that he retained the same control of his people, even though temporarily absent, as he had when amongst them. And any burgher, whether in South Africa, America or Europe, obeys now his verbal commands as implicitly as ever, with unshaken faith in his judgment.

STATE SECRETARY F. W. REITZ

From Hectorspruit on, with the loss of the railroad, the direct communication with foreign countries was liable to interruption, and, with the fighting corps more difficult to follow, the various attachés decided to leave for their home governments. Reitz, the gifted state-secretary, with bandoliers on his shoulder and rifle in hand had made the final arrangements for the president's departure, and as he swung into his saddle to follow, with his two sons, the fortunes of the states under Louis Botha, the attachés crowded around him to bid him farewell. It did our heart good to see the appreciation this Christian man had won from these representatives of all nations except England, who could not say sufficient to convey their regards. Reitz, by his courtesy and culture, had won all hearts with whom he came in contact, and these foreigners recognized the pathos of his discarding the office and picking up the rifle, so that he might become a unit of the limited number available to defend their country against the invaders. We venture to suggest that few of these men will forget their last glance at the open, kindly countenance, or fail to remember this splendid example of devotion to a cause.

All burghers on foot were to follow the railroad to Komati Poort, when, after assisting in the destruction of the government stores, they were to take refuge in the Portuguese territory, to avoid transportation. All who were well-mounted were to follow Botha and Viljoen north, into the Lydenburg district to continue the resistance.

The ground around the depot was littered with artillery in all stages of repair. Limbers, carriages and muzzle loaders, spoils of the former war of 1881, had been brought down to this station and thrown in great stacks from the cars. These, with many field guns, for which

the Republicans had long since exhausted the ammunition, were dragged to their final resting place on the banks of the river, where they were destroyed by dynamite and sunk to the bottom of the stream. Two British 12-pounders and a British mountain gun, shared this fate with two Nordenfeldt maxims, two 75-millimetre Creusots, two Krupps, a 75-millimetre Nordenfeldt, and three muzzle-loading 12-pounders.

Sadly the dismounted Dutchmen and foreigners, under command of General Pienaar, took leave of their comrades following the railroad to Komati Poort, where they destroyed some tons of stores in flour, canned stuff and ammunition. The Selati branch railroad, a single track was banked solid with ten miles of trucks, loaded with all the remaining government stores, and to these fire was applied wherever it would burn.

The "Long Tom," injured in the British assault at Ladysmith and afterward repaired, was carried across the Crocodile river where "Dynamite Dick" King acted as its executioner. With dynamite a drug on the market, it was filled full of this explosive and broken literally into pieces of only a few inches in size.

The same course of procedure followed now, as in each rapid flight since Bloemfontein in March. The second to the last train to leave was the Red Cross train, picking up the sick and wounded, after which came the dynamite train, in charge of King, or "Dynamite Dick," who seemed determined on leaving nothing behind capable of use in any form by the British, that could be moved by dynamite or destroyed by fire. He had followed behind every evacuation since Pretoria, doing his work systematically and without fear of personal risk, firing station houses, or destroying bridges and culverts as he moved away. Here at Komati Poort, though the town was al-

ready abandoned, he returned and fired the store rooms and trains of provisions located there. He also destroyed much of the ammunition, doing his work so thoroughly that he and his lone assistant were surprised by three British scouts. The Britishers were so dumbfounded by the cool deliberation displayed, that, without difficulty King made them prisoners, and locking them disarmed in his car, he proceeded in his work, scattering coal-oil over anything reluctant to burn. A few car loads of six-inch ammunition puzzled him, but with infernal ingenuity he devised a scheme of scattering among the shells, on the floor of the cars, a box of detonators. Two days later, the British, in an attempt to unload these heavy shells, exploded a detonator, resulting immediately in the death of thirteen and the injury of twenty men.

King hoped to make the destruction of the Crocodile river bridge the last act of his useful career in the Boer service, and twice had the charges laid for this purpose, but President Kruger was led by the representatives of the Portuguese government, to believe that the safety of the refugees on Portuguese territory depended on the bridge being left intact. He telegraphed to this effect to General Pienaar, and King reluctantly relinquished his wish. The failure to destroy this important bridge was a sad mistake, for within two days of its abandonment, the enemy had established communications with Pretoria, and thereby gained another base for the army. The Portuguese thereupon relinquished their embargo on contrabands of war, and ammunition and supplies were freely shipped from Lorenzo Marques to the Capitol over this route.

King's one assistant was a German who followed him faithfully and fearlessly, obeying his orders in every detail and answering to the sobriquet "Germany,"—a quiet,

wizened, little blond with blue eyes, the very last person an ordinary observer would imagine capable of the desperate exploits which he undertook with the utmost equanimity, at the bidding of his self-imposed "boss." Following the retreat from Hectorspruit they had discovered a Russian ambulance surgeon, sick with fever, and unable to ride, whom they placed in a shady spot, and proceeded with the work of blowing up a culvert in the neighborhood. The doctor, in pain and shaking with fever, emitted some groans, which attracted the attention of "Germany" who, on inquiring, was informed by the doctor that he wanted to die. He immediately transmitted the information to King, and on the "boss" carelessly remarking "better kill him," Germany, without any comment and unnoticed, picked up his carbine to satisfy the doctor's desires. The helpless medico noticing his would-be executioner's suspicious actions, while the latter was manœuvring into a position intended to avoid waste of ammunition, raised a great outcry, causing King to look up and inquire what was the matter. With a puzzled look on his face, as if the matter was beyond his comprehension, "Germany" replied: "he don't vant to die dis vay, and say I give him some medicine, he vill recover." King, with some difficulty persuaded his colleague that they had better let the doctor try his own method, so together they placed him in their car, and after firing the fuse of the charge in the culvert, they proceeded to Komati Poort, where to the surprise of the little Teuton, the patient did recover with his own medicine.

On September 23, the Guards under Pole-Carew entered Komati Poort, and a few burghers stayed to exchange greetings at the bridge, which, to the regret of all having the Republican cause at heart, had to be

J. N. KING

left intact; then breaking their weapons, these men walked over the border to Rosanna Garcia, to find transportation in open trucks to Lorenzo Marques, where seven hundred took refuge.

The British now had a field day, and on the occasion of an inspection by Portuguese officers, Pole-Carew received the congratulations of the King of Portugal, in having established communications with the sea, through his territory. The officials were banqueted and mutual laudations were the order of the day. Meanwhile, the same premature congratulations between Pretoria and London on the end of the war were exchanged.

Roberts followed up the event by publishing another proclamation, calling the burghers' attention to the fact that President Kruger had left the country and that their struggle was hopeless. He promised that burghers now surrendering would not be transported, excepting members of the late government and those responsible for the war, and ended by an appeal to them to yield for the sake of their wives and families; but his alternative proclamations, threatening imprisonment and farm-burning, with others offering inducements to yield, had lost their power through lack of sincerity, and this one had no effect beyond making the remaining men more determined to continue the struggle.

On September 26, the "Herzog" left Lorenzo Marques with Postmaster-General Van Alphen, Assistant Secretary of State Grobler, and State Treasurer Malherbe, to be followed in October by President Kruger on the Netherlands war-ship, "Gelderland," which arrived in Marseilles on November 22, where the President made his first public appeal to the European nations in these words:

"The war which is being waged against the two Republics has reached the utmost limits of barbarity. In

my life I have had occasion to fight many times with the savage tribes of Africa, but the barbarians with whom we have now to fight are much worse than the others. They have gone so far as to arm the Kaffirs against us. They burn our farms which we have built with so much difficulty. They hurt the women and children whose husbands and fathers have been killed or taken prisoners. They leave them without protection, without wood, and often without bread. But whatever may happen we shall never surrender. We will keep until the end, our great and immovable confidence in the Almighty, in our God. Our cause is just and if the justice of men fails us, the Almighty God who is above all nations, and to whom the future belongs will not abandon us. I can assure you that if the Transvaal and the Orange Free State are to lose their independence, it will be because the two Boer people will have been destroyed, with their women and children."

The aspect of affairs around Pretoria in regard to De la Rey, remained the same as when we left there, and except for an incursion here and there, he still hovered around his favorite old haunts, pursuing the same offensive and defensive tactics and continued to threaten every exposed outpost. Elaborate plans of a sweeping nature, involving thousands of men and horse, intended to bring this Boer commander's career to a premature end, were carefully matured in Pretoria, but the wily old fox who was to be the principal actor, not being consulted, failed to materialize at the exact time and place expected. These sweeping movements were repeated at various intervals with the same sure result until it imparted an air of despair to the business, and kept the telegraph operators burning midnight oil, cabling to London long reports of cattle, horses and wagons captured from the enemy

during their flight. London vibrated and sighed, society yawned, and the clubs formulated opinions while poor Tommy Atkins, attracted by the promised sport of pig-sticking, cursed the fate that brought him to the land of phantom horsemen, veldt and kopjes.

The enemy, while accusing us of being brigands were sailing dangerously near the practice themselves. Acting on the theory that if you cannot catch a Boer, catch a cow; stock was collected by cattle-rangers in Pretoria district, belonging to Colonel Morgan's force. These men were organized in bands of twenty-five, and paid a bounty according to the number of cattle with which they returned to camp. Stock of all ages and condition came under the ban of these marauders, and farms belonging to Whites and Kaffirs, were denuded to gain the prize money, causing endless unnecessary suffering to the inhabitants. House-burning, still in full blast, was now indulged in for pastime, and no longer called forth open rancor, nor even comment. The time for outward expression of feeling had passed. It had been better for the Imperialist otherwise, for the unspoken utterance sank deep into the hearts of the defenders, to form a latent store of force in the resistance which has followed. It was to be a struggle to the death, a simple problem, involving Boer patriotism and resentment, backed by the well-known tenacity of the Dutchman on one side, and the British exchequer on the other. Losses of a few companies were to be only so many incidents in the general result.

Lord Roberts, who had delayed his projected departure, on account of the sickness of one of his daughters, finally left for England on November 2, leaving Kitchener to unravel the turmoil of a vast and demoralized army, with extended lines, unable to act on the offensive, distributed

in locked garrisons, or futile, immobile columns, who considered the capture of a Boer family hidden in the bush, as a feat to be cabled over the seven seas for its glorification. Lord Roberts, in a farewell proclamation, eulogized the troops for their valor, patriotism, endurance and humanity, and reiterated his now historic declaration that the war was ended. Lord Kitchener assumed supreme command over the forces in South Africa, and Lord Roberts sailed for England, via Natal, fearing to go to Cape Town overland, through the already "conquered" Orange Free State, to report to his grateful sovereign the result of his year's campaign, having lost 40,075 men in casualties, exclusive of the sick and wounded in hospitals, besides 12,809 broadly reported as missing, which, in other words, means unburied,—a sum total nearly twice as great as the largest force the Federals ever had at one time in the field.

On November 5, Prince Christian Victor, one of the English royal princes, having died of fever, was buried in Pretoria, by command of the queen.

Chapter XVII

A chapter of Christian De Wet—Roodeval—De Wet corralled—Prinsloo's reasons—Pieter De Wet surrenders—Commando Nek—De Wet's insanity—To Cape Colony and back—Thabu N'Chu—De Wet's methods—As a companion—The three envoys—As a citizen—The new warfare—The situation—And conclusion.

WHEN the Transvaal burghers crossed the Vaal from the Orange Free State in May, President Steyn and Generals De Wet, Oliver, Prinsloo and Lemmer, with Commandants Brand and Kritzinger remained in their own country and had untiringly harassed the enemy's communication. In April, after Generals De Wet and Oliver's force abandoned the siege of Colonel Dalgetty at Wepener, 30,000 men, under twelve of England's best leaders, undertook to rid their army of this scourge, but the phantom general escaped to a broken line of hills east of Winburg, which town he attacked in May, obtaining temporary advantage. Then he dashed north and hovered around the new capital of Heilbron, to protect President Steyn and his officers.

On May 31 he attacked Lindley, south of Heilbron, and east of Kroonstad, and captured, after two days' siege, the garrison, of 500 Imperial yeomanry, who with little credit yielded without serious loss to themselves, except two guns. General Colville to whom this force belonged, was afterwards recalled in disgrace and his command taken from him, for not having reinforced the garrison, but he was not altogether to blame as De Wet, having gained control of the telegraph communications, had deluded him by sending assuring despatches from the besieged force, completely misleading the general by using

one of the British government ciphers. On June 3, he surrounded and captured 180 Highlanders and a convoy of fifty-five wagons, within thirty miles of Lindley, and close to Heilbron. Two days later he attacked the Derbyshire regiment at Leuuspruit, south of Roodeval and east of Heilbron, which force he surrounded and captured with a loss to the Imperials of their colonel and 140 men. The troops were raw, just arrived from England, and De Wet, the previous day, had watched them from the neighboring hills, pitching their tents and straightening their camp in the most approved Aldershot manner, without thought of impending danger. He then turned his attention to the neighboring railroad station of Roodeval, which was garrisoned by Canadians under Captain Grant and Captain Archie McDonald. Having cut the telegraph communications south to Kroonstad and north to Leuuspruit, with 1,500 men and five guns, he surrounded this force, which were firmly intrenched behind bags of provisions and bales of clothing. De Wet sent in a messenger informing the garrison they were surrounded and cut off and gave them a half hour's grace to surrender, an offer they declined, defending the garrison gamily for six hours, until the burghers' steadily encroaching sharp-shooters demoralized the force and they yielded 180 prisoners, after losing Lieutenant Blanchard and thirty-seven men killed and wounded.

This engagement was fought on De Wet's own farm, Rooival, and the post was the advance of the British reestablished communication with Cape Town, consequently the yield in spoils was large, including two trains, fifteen hundred bags of accumulated mail for Pretoria, and the entire winter outfit and uniforms for the invading army, including 13,000 suits of underclothing. There was a train load of ammunition for the twelve, fifteen

and 240 pound guns, and $325,000 in specie, forming the delayed pay of the troops. The enormous supply of stores captured caused De Wet to facetiously remark that it was a better crop than he had ever raised on his farm at any previous season. He destroyed the large railroad bridges at Roodeval and Rhenoster river, reconstructed recently after three weeks' work by the engineers, and blew up every culvert for twenty miles north to Vredefort, and three miles to the south. After dividing the spoils in specie and appropriating clothing and food needed, the burghers piled the remainder of stores around the trains and station-house, and fired it, then marching the prisoners to De Wet's homestead, some distance away from the railroad, they watched, with increasing fascination as twilight sank into night, the flames rising to great heights, illuminating the country for miles around, and carrying far and near a message to the amazed columns gathering for pursuit, that the Flying Dutchmen had made another successful *coup*. If anything was wanting to complete a grand spectacle, it was supplied by innumerable sparks and burning timbers hurled skyward hundreds of feet after the great explosions, the burnt fragments passing through the air like shooting stars, in all directions, to the tune of screaming and bursting siege gun shells.

Although threatened by columns under Hunter, Brabant, Clery, Clements, Colville and Rundle, he quietly rested on his farm for two days, dividing the loot among his men, who were all delighted in the sudden acquisition of new boots and underclothing. His scouts, everywhere, with never a pause for rest, brought the latest information of his pursuer's movements, while their companions and horses recuperated. On the second day, it was reported, a force from the north, under Kitchener, and

one from the south under Methuen, expected to make a junction the next day at Roodeval, and with that unerring decision that has made him famous, De Wet determined to anticipate his pursuers. He gathered up his command and made a midnight attack on two trains, directly between the two advancing forces, which were engaged in repairing the bridges at Leuuspruit.

The Imperial force thus attacked, numbering 200, were of the Pioneer railway corps, under the command of Major L. I. Seymour, an American citizen employed before the war as consulting mining engineer for the Rand Gold mines at Johannesburg, an English mining corporation. Among the killed was the major, and his whole force yielded after an hour's defense. De Wet destroyed the two trains, on one of which was Lord Kitchener's personal baggage, and burnt the half-constructed bridge and material, then crossed the railroad and headed for the northwest. This feat insured him the title of Railroad Traffic Manager, and Regulator of the Mails, gracefully bestowed upon him by the British rank and file, and he has most conscientiously lived up to this assumed vocation for the past two years, if one may judge by the fact that there have been no complaints of neglected duties.

De Wet's prisoners now numbered nearly that of his own force, between 1,400 and 1,500, and as they were necessarily dismounted, they hampered his movements. He tried to induce the officers to give their parole for themselves and men. This, the officers, well-knowing his predicament, refused to do. Oliver rejoined De Wet from the east, and at a Krygsraad it was decided that the former should convey the prisoners east while De Wet engaged the enemy. Oliver marched his captives to a little village called Reitz, and soon after put them over

General Christian De Wet

the border into Natal, rejoining De Wet at Bethleheim with the captive officers whom he had retained.

Here the Federal forces were cornered by pursuing columns, and the glad tidings, cabled to London, filled the specials at short intervals with startling headlines, such as " De Wet Surrounded," " A Matter of Moments," " De Wet Captured." All available British troops were requisitioned to make capture complete, and escape seemed impossible. The cordon was regarded so formidable that storming was considered an unnecessary expenditure of life and energy, and continual bombardment was resorted to. During the last night the British pickets reported that the Federals were moving camp, and the troops are said to have lain on their arms, awaiting the charge which was thought necessary for the Boer general to escape. They heard the hoarse shouts of the teamsters, and cracking of whips which continued until daylight, to their surprise, without any advance. Untiring, the shouting seemed to ring, the commotion was certainly caused by the loaded wagons being dragged over the rough ground, and every now and again they heard the rattle of a piece of artillery as it clattered over the rocks. What could it mean? Surely the Dutch would not wait until daylight to charge a superior force? But daylight came without any demonstration and the British could see the motionless expanse intervening between themselves and the Boer camping-ground and it contained nothing hostile. Chagrined when they expected to bay their quarry, they made an assault, but met no resistance. De Wet and Oliver had slipped away over a bridle path, considered by the British impassable, with all the wagons, artillery, and transport. Two wagons had been loaded with sheet-iron and scraps to make a noise in imitation of artillery, and had for the benefit of the English watch-

ers been industriously driven around the camp all night by two faithful Kaffir servants. By the time the slower Imperials with their huge equipments came to a realization of the truth, De Wet had put eight hours between them, and with the knowledge that he could out-march them a half day in a day, added to the fact that the British were now, fortunately for him, centred, his mind was temporarily free of anxiety on their account.

Making his way toward Honingspruit, he again attacked a train near to Rhenoster river, on which was Kitchener, without, however, effecting his capture. But a week later he managed, on July 2, to destroy the railroad at Honingspruit, then heading south he made his way to Winburg, where he was again bayed by six columns, and his certain capture once more reported, but fighting a three days' fight in the kopjes he forced a passage over Rundle, and taking 1,500 men and his favorite five guns, he left Oliver and Prinsloo to work out their own salvation, retreating east to Fouriesburg, closely followed by Hunter and Rundle. By a forced march he shook off his pursuers just in time to encounter Broadwood on July 19, at Palmeitfontein, south of Bethleheim, and in a sharp fight left eight of his dead behind. Accompanied by President Steyn, he again crossed the railroad, and pointing for Honingspruit, destroyed railroad communications and the telegraph lines as he went. The pursuit now became very warm, all the available forces from Pretoria, consisting of three cavalry brigades, were hotly on his trail. His horses and transport animals were succumbing every moment to the tremendous day and night race, to elude the close pursuing columns. Again, he recrossed the railroad, making his way this time to Reitzburg, in the northwest of the state,

leaving to Broadwood several wagons and many stragglers whose horses had given out.

The force De Wet had left at Fouriesburg, under Pieter De Wet, Oliver, and Prinsloo were hard pressed, but Oliver taking his own following succeeded in escaping toward Harrismith. Pieter De Wet also escaped, but went to his farm near Lindley. Prinsloo was surrounded with the balance, most of them being camp-followers, weary of the war. Prinsloo, seeing no hope asked for four days' armistice which was declined. He then asked individual liberty for himself and burghers with the right to keep their horses and possessions and return to their farms, which General Hunter also refused to concede, and on July 26, he surrendered unconditionally, with 980 men and one Krupp gun. Driscoll's scouts entered Fouriesburg under General Paget on the twenty-sixth, and the English reported this as a great victory, quoting the number of prisoners at 5,000, and Prinsloo is said to have stated that his burghers forced him to surrender, which is probably untrue, in view of the fact that De Wet abandoned him and his force to their fate, thereby clearly indicating his estimate of both general and men.

A few days later, Pieter De Wet, a brother of General Christian De Wet, rode from his farm with his staff into Kroonstad, and gave up his arms. Christian had long despaired of Pieter, as lacking the qualities necessary for a soldier or a patriot, and their relationship had been strained for some time on account of jealousy on the part of Pieter, in regard to the preferment of his brother in the matter of command.

Broadwood took up a position in High Hills, seven miles from the Vaal and close to Reitzburg to prevent

De Wet from crossing the Vaal into the South African Republic. Methuen arrived at Potchefstroom on July 28 with the same object, watching Schoeman's Drift in the river. With De Wet was President Steyn who desired to consult with the heads of the Transvaal government, in the eastern part of that state, and the duty of escorting him to the safe guardianship of the Transvaal troops, De Wet would entrust to none, and it consequently devolved on himself, and the chances of his responsibility caused him grave concern for the safety of the chief magistrate.

The British infantry troops made extraordinary marches in this pursuit, the Shropshire regiment being reported to have done forty-three miles in thirty-two hours and the city Imperial volunteers thirty miles in seventeen hours, but De Wet, after resting his horses a week succeeded in forcing a passage through De Wet's Drift in the river. He had not had an opportunity to mount the men who had lost their horses, or replenish his transport, and therefore he had no choice but to sacrifice two guns and thirty men as prisoners on the passage, but notwithstanding the straits he was reduced to, he succeeded in crossing the Potchefstroom-Krugersdorp Railroad, at Welverdriend five days later. When marching north he tried the passage at Commando Nek, but found it in possession of Baden-Powell. The horses belonging to his command were dreadfully exhausted and giving out daily, and fearing an attack in this dilemma, he resorted to a clever ruse. Sending a messenger in under a flag of truce, he demanded the immediate surrender of the English commander, but did not take the trouble to wait for a reply, simply directing the bearer where to rejoin him and immediately started with his exhausted army to make a detour of the obstruc-

tion. Colonel Baden-Powell, either awed, or overcome by his sense of humor, replied, asking on what terms he would be permitted to surrender, but De Wet did not receive the answer until he was safely scurrying east in the rear of the hero of Mafeking, and when that commander inquired into his failure to receive an answer, he found his *slim* opponent had once again given them the slip.

De Wet arrived on the Crocodile river on August 19, where he relinquished his charge of the President to General De la Rey who safely escorted him to the seat of the government at Machadodorp. On this day, De Wet was within fifteen miles of Pretoria, at a picnic resort named Wonderboom, but on a demonstration by the British, he fell back on the Bushveldt, to the Pyramids. The object of his mission, namely to convey the President in safety through the British lines, having been accomplished, he recrossed the railroad at Bank Station, between Welverdriend and Krugersdorp, where he captured a supply train of provisions bound to Methuen at Potchefstroom. After burning the train and destroying the railroad and telegraph communications, he continued south across the Vaal into the Free State, closely followed by Colonel McKinnon, who had made, up to August 24, the phenomenal march in pursuit, of 224 miles in fourteen days, and yet had not come within touch of the elusive Boers.

Roberts cabled to England that De Wet's force had been broken up and consisted of 300 men, but we next hear of the indefatigable leader on the Vet river, where, in a bold attempt to destroy the railroad bridge, he encountered General MacDonald, of Majuba and Omdurman fame, with his Highland brigade, who captured thirty wagons from the Republicans, and forced him to

retreat into the northeast of the state. Both forces, pursuers and pursued being thoroughly worn, now recuperated. De Wet was tired out, but so were all the columns available for pursuit. The only move of importance before both combatants settled down to a month's rest, was a British advance on the towns of Reitz, Linley and Heilbron, which they reoccupied on August 26, driving the Republicans west, where later President Steyn rejoined the burghers after his conference at Machadodorp, having returned on the southern circuit through Barberton and Standerton, and the Orange Free State capital was reestablished at Essenbosch, northeast of Bothaville.

"De Wet's army was destroyed, lost, De Wet himself wandering aimlessly about with only a body-guard for a following. De Wet had become insane." Such were the statements cabled to the four points of the earth by the English, and repeated and reiterated time and again. The fact is, the pace kept up during the previous three months had grown unendurable to any mortal and they were mutually satisfied to settle down for a month of well-understood truce. In the month so spent, except for short trips by small patrols to Rhenoster river, the territory of Bothaville, and Vredefort, no movement of any importance transpired on the Republican side, and the enemy were too busy repairing the damaged railroads, revictualing the army, and gathering its resources for the spring campaign, besides watching the Republican armies in the north to go out of the way to hunt trouble with De Wet. The resting ground chosen by the Free Staters supplied warmth and good grazing for the stock, and as a result, De Wet was the first to become active. On October 5, he opened up the spring campaign by

making a demonstration against Vredefort, held by the Canadians under Colonel Lisle. De Wet's command, far from being destroyed or lost, consisted as usual, of 1,500 men and five guns, for which number he seemed to have a peculiar attachment. The demonstration developed what De Wet wanted to know, which was, in what proximity the English columns available for relief were to each other and being satisfied he could do no immediate good in this region, he swung round, crossed the railroad without doing any damage, and dashing toward Lindley, forced the British garrison on October 9, to retreat on Kroonstad, following and sniping the column all the way, inflicting severe loss. Recrossing the railroad and striking north, five days later he surprised and captured a detachment of Cheshires at Reitzburg, all of whom he immediately released after disarming them.

The scouts reported a large body of the enemy coming from the east, and at once he set out for Parys, near the Vaal, intending to swing around the force and attack their rear, but Knox, who had been duped so many times became wise, and as a consequence, De Wet found himself at bay at Frederickstadt on November 27. After some spirited skirmishing he broke away with a loss of two guns and five wagons, going to Geneva south of Sand river, and capturing there a mail train and ninety prisoners. Then he turned his hand to destroying the railroad and telegraph communications, and being unmolested, took his time, until interrupted by a strong force, when he moved away to the northwest. On November 8, south of Bothaville, he encountered another force, presumably under De Lisle. There was no doubt they were after him, and the urgent necessity for horses impressed

him with the wisdom of care. Therefore he struck across the state for the south where Hertzog and Fourie were operating.

This movement did not at once occasion any surprise, because it was not understood, but no sooner had it become so than it created consternation among the Imperials, and columns were, without loss of time set in motion, to foil what they believed to be a threatened invasion of the Cape Colony. To some extent this suspicion had ground, but De Wet's object was to procure badly needed remounts, which he did by crossing the Orange river in spite of the columns, two weeks later, and joining Hertzog, who had made it his business to commandeer all the horses he could lay his hands on. On his return one of a cordon of columns, tried to head him off with temporary success, but on November 21 he found a passage between Warringham's Store and Alexandria, and with his force augmented to 2,300 men by Hertzog, he rapidly moved north and surprised in a night attack his birthplace, De Wetsdorp, which was garrisoned by the Irish rifles and Highland Infantry, and with the capture of the force he made good his two guns lost to Knox some time previous.

Knox, on the railroad at Edenburg, south of Bloemfontein, started to avenge this daring attack, and he drove De Wet south to Rouxville, in the extreme southeast of the state. Outdistancing his pursuers with the intention of crossing the Caledon river and again moving north, De Wet got into the triangle formed by the junction of that and the Orange river, but from the wet weather, both the rivers were swollen, and, as the enemy now declared, impassable, and again they were sure they had him. After several attempts he essayed Karriepont Drift, on the Orange river, then tried the Commissie

TREKING IN THE ORANGE FREE STATE

bridge on the Caledon but failing to force a passage at either, he crossed at a drift lower down, and immediately flew north gathering on December 10, 120 of Brabant's horse, on his way, whom he disarmed and turned loose, the horses making a welcome addition to his equipment. Hotly followed, he met on December 12, the British forces from the north, fifteen miles east of Thabu N'Chu, and his position again began to become serious. He found himself completely surrounded by overwhelming numbers, holding strong position in the hills on every side. Never before had the British a more propitious opportunity to make good their oft-repeated reports of the capture of De Wet, but the dashing leader was equal to the occasion, and abandoning his heavy wagons, he made, with his horsemen, a feint in force at one of their strongest positions, when, suddenly wheeling, the 2,500 men, with their artillery, led by President Steyn, Fourie and Hertzog, dashed in between two forts on separate hills. De Wet, the last man, watching the safety of his men, succeeded in reaching safety with the loss of but one gun and twenty-five men, in this splendid charge, and once clear he quickly made his way to Winburg, leaving his enemy behind at Senekal.

De Wet was again free. Aided by his lieutenants he has since tirelessly followed every advantage within reasonable measure of safety. For two years he has harassed the British with success, inflicting tremendous losses with a minimum to himself. He changes his field of operations whenever hard pressed or the country fails to support him, forcing the English to continually extend the area of their activities until their operations have degenerated into a round of hurried visits, no place being effectually occupied outside the principal depots. He reduced the enemy's garrisons over an enormous territory

to the point of a nervous tension which precluded anything but the necessity of defense.

As observed by an American newspaper, "the many attempts of the British generals to verify the reports of their commander-in-chief that De Wet was surrounded and had no guns, always proved that he was well supplied with these weapons, and was thoroughly conversant with their use." His success can be briefly summarized as first, an absence of unwieldy transport, second, the power of accepting success or defeat with an even grace, a virtue shared by his force, third, his capacity to subsist good-naturedly on whatever happened to be available in the matter of food, officers and men emulating him, living for days on mealies eaten dry from the ear, or boiled in water without salt, varied occasionally by such other food as his men foraged and the game of the country supplied, but above all, his splendid corps of scouts, who did most of their work at night, never failing to report any movement within forty miles. Beyond this what has probably played the most important part in his operations, has been his fine rear-guard actions, enabling his transports to get a start, and his ability to disband his entire army on short notice with instructions to assemble three, five, or ten days later at a given point. Each unit confident of De Wet's judgment, was willing and anxious to make the rendezvous by their different routes, mutually exchanging notes and congratulations on the conclusion of the strategy. The knowledge of this manœuvre, frequently used, effectually disposed of the reports so persistently circulated, that De Wet terrorized over his men.

This silent, usually austere, farmer needed only this occasion to develop the military genius lying dormant under his rough exterior. As it now stands, he has

baffled the ablest and most proficient masters in the military science, that the British army has been able to send against him, and by wearing out, with 2,000 men the total number of columns available for mobile action, in the Free State, in a hot campaign over a treeless country, he has demonstrated that an army need not be accepted as whipped until it is captured.

As a companion, De Wet is complete, the soldier being out of evidence, except in actual conflict. When necessity called for it, he is known to have shared his food, and even his clothes, with protesting members of his command. He supplied his prisoners with the best treatment and food in his power, believing that the kindness would return to his people by the acts being reported to the civilized world, the only door he possessed to the millions watching the unequal struggle. He has an unbounded faith in the justice of his cause and the ultimate triumph of the Republic, with a sensitive regard for the opinions of the enemy, and an almost childlike delight in the eulogies his brilliant campaigns have called forth. He treated the base untruths of inhumanity with the unquenchable humor that never failed him, which bubbled over in the most critical positions, when, to one less sincere, the danger to himself and command would have precluded any levity. He took all advice offered until the time for action arrived, when the real commander was in evidence, giving his orders promptly and decisively, with confidence in his own judgment, and brooking no opposition.

As an illustration, in March, 1901, the British sent to De Wet three envoys from Kroonstad, who were to scatter proclamations, and do their utmost to influence the rank and file to lay down arms and surrender. These three faithfuls were Andries Wessels, Morgandal and

Walker, the latter an Englishman naturalized in the Orange Free State. Had the position been reversed no reader would need to be told what kind of fate these men met. Two at least were known to be spies and English sympathizers. De Wet, upon discovering their mission placed them under arrest. Morgandal was tried and executed, evidence being found on him to warrant this act of war. Wessels was retained and kept under guard, while Walker, given every facility for doing so, made his escape back to his employers. In spite of Wessels writing to inform the British commander that Walker had escaped and he was retained by the Republicans, horrible accounts were cabled by Lord Kitchener to London, giving the killing of all three envoys as an assured fact, and filling in the details of their torture and death, with no other object than to work on the sympathy of the foreign world. The envoy's story was a fabrication intended to justify, when the time arrived, the wholesale murder of these farmers, who had handled thousands of British prisoners with consideration and mercy. A month later, when Lord Kitchener imagined he had De Wet corralled in the fork of the Caledon and Orange rivers, he issued orders to give no quarter, and although we are aware that Mr. Richard Cartwright, the editor of the *South African News,* Cape Town, has been sent to prison because he failed to produce documentary evidence in support of the same statement, we modestly beg leave to reiterate it.

On October 20, six months later, Lord Kitchener, as an afterthought, cabled that it was a mistake, and that two of the envoys sent to the Boers were alive and unharmed, practically admitting he had been guilty of gross exaggeration. Discussion was in active progress in the British official circles and press, as to the best manner

of disposing of De Wet, and the hope, at first only breathed, that he should be killed, was later openly avowed, giving it a tone of public opinion. Yet it excites wonder that this order should emanate from a commander of a great army, whose soldiers, for eighteen months past had been surrendering by hundreds with an approximate loss of two per cent, confident of kind treatment and freedom from abuse. The latter six months they did their best to avoid even this two per cent, by giving up wholesale, with little or no resistance, well knowing the Republicans had no facilities for keeping them and that they would soon be returned uninjured to their friends, and this murderous order was directed against the brave, humane leader, who was responsible for fifty per cent of these captures. As related by an English commissioned officer, the men who had been through De Wet's hands, "sickened at heart when they heard the command, and is it a wonder, we felt glad when, by his splendid strategy, he evaded the massacre?" No matter how it affected their own fortunes, they thought so chivalrous a foe deserved a better fate. Patriotic Englishmen can blush for the good name of the country made odious by this war.

We have endeavored to outline the career of De Wet, the remarkable and ideal citizen-soldier. Now for a short retrospect of the former peaceful farmer. Although De Wet indicates Holland Dutch parentage, he is, by descent, two-thirds Huguenot. Son of Pieter Jacobus De Wet, a voortrekker from the Cape Colony, he was born forty-nine years ago at De Wetsdorp, on the site of the present township of that name, presented by his father to the government of the Orange Free State. In height, five feet ten, broad-shouldered, his face is square-set and heavy, with short, scraggy, iron-grey, black beard, and

eyes ever alert. He is a silent man, with unexpected outbursts of good-humor, and though usually preoccupied, is quick and methodical in action. His education was only such as the limited facilities of a wild, undeveloped country afforded, and consequently, his early youth, except for farm duties, and occasional incursions of warlike natives, was uneventful. At a little over twenty, he purchased a farm in the Carolina district of the South African Republic, where he went to live, and shortly after, he was returned as member of the Volksraad for that district. The next we hear of him was in '81, when at the age of twenty-nine, he was appointed veldkornet and served in that capacity in the first war of independence. On the conclusion of peace, he returned to the Orange Free State and took up his abode near Heilbron, on Rooival, the farm which he purchased. Later, he was returned to the Orange Free State Volksraad for the district of his birthplace, De Wetsdorp, and occupied his seat in the National Legislature, until '97, when he resigned for the purpose of contesting the seat for the district where he lived, but the war intervened, and the election never occurred. A father of six children, he carried three sons and two nephews with him into the field, who continue to be his constant companions. When the relations between the South African Republic and Great Britain became strained to the breaking point, and war seemed inevitable, he made a hurried visit to Pretoria and urged President Kruger to lose no time in forcing the British government to show its hand. He stuck close to the old man, and was probably the most strenuous advocate of the so-called ultimatum.

From here on, owing to the large number of flying columns and patrols on both sides, scattered over an ever-increasing area, each hunting the other at one time,

or being in turn hunted, the difficulty of guiding the reader through the rapid change of events will be appreciated. We could only write in a general manner, for at times, in so far as being an aggressive factor, the Boers are non-existent. We do not mean to suggest that organized resistance on the part of the Republicans is at an end, or that it has degenerated into what is commonly known as guerrilla warfare, indeed, we strongly object to the latter term being applied to the Boer methods at any stage of the hostilities. Even now it is true that De Wet and other leaders, such as Botha, De la Rey, Ben Viljoen, and Kritzinger have resorted, through expediency, to new tactics, but they have been entirely of their own creation without precedence in the annals of other countries. Events have shown that there never was a time when concentration for combined action justified it, that the forces necessary were not, at short notice, at the point desired. The Boers have given to the world an example of heroism unsurpassed. They have taught an entirely new lesson in the art of national citizen defense. They have demonstrated that the "born soldier" is a reality, not an euphemism. Why, then, now withhold from them that well-merited modicum of praise which nations yet unborn will gratefully bestow? Why call their splendid resistance "guerrilla warfare" with the implied dishonor affixed? Why, indeed, not call it the "new warfare," or Boer warfare? It cannot be denied that the example has already borne fruit. Which of the great nations would now care to enter upon the conquest of a smaller one for spoils with that equanimity of two and a half years ago? And for the preservation of the smaller race, and comfort of the prospective conqueror to whom are we indebted?

De Wet, at intervals, for reasons of his own, or when

hard pressed by battalions sometimes aggregating 30,000, divides his force into two bodies numbering from five to a hundred. Raids and counter-raids by flying columns, captures and recaptures of towns, have followed with certain succession, garrisons are constantly captured and turned loose, after being disarmed, numerous others have been forced to evacuate their post, followed and sniped at, until they found refuge in some more strongly fortified depot. Because the Boer has few cannon in the field besides those in safe keeping, somewhere beneath the earth, to say that he is a bandit is as unjust as it is absurd. At least British soldiers know that the Boer, without a cannon, is a most dangerous foe as he has a sure and certain manner of getting at short range without notice. As a matter of fact, experience has taught, that extreme mobility of the character now used by the Boer generals precludes any but light field-weapons.

We have endeavored to follow as closely as possible the course of this great struggle. But since we left the scene of action, the authentic reports are so tangled and vague, that it is impossible to do more than generalize. Up to the period chronicled the facts are from personal observation or close knowledge of detail gained from association with the participants, and we have no hesitation in offering the substance herein contained as a statement of things as they were.

England now insists that the war is over and the country conquered, while hourly adopting more strenuous methods to subdue the inhabitants. Weekly they ship fresh troops to replace the war-worn men in the field and monthly the effectually occupied territory becomes less, until there now remains in South Africa but a thin strip on the coast wherein the British troops are safe beyond their fortifications.

THREE BURGHER BUNKIES

THE MOBILE BOER

The English generals seeking approbation from a critical foreign public, have considered no alleged outrage too contemptible to cable the world over, while a battery is lost or a company decimated with barely a press notice. They have destroyed the property of these patriots as rebels and placed ropes around their necks as traitors.

Hence, with a weekly expenditure of seven million dollars and an army six thousand miles from its base of supplies England continues to wage a war against these men; who have seen their houses burnt, stock seized, and families driven to the hills, or herded in the deathly reconcentrado camps, to die at a rate of mortality that practically means the extermination of the women and children of their race in three years.

Is it not reasonable to suppose that these people now living on the land with everything to gain by continued resistance and all lost by surrender should remain in the field with the determination to win that independence so much desired, hoping in the darkest hour to carry the war to ultimate success, and yet build a republic on the ruins of their homes and the graves of their kindred, to rival that of any self-governed country in the world?

Fighting as a nation, for an assailed military honor, England has reduced the situation to a condition that if she wins the country she loses, for by the attempted conquest she has increased her large national debt a fourth in the past two years. It has cost her a billion and a half dollars to war against two republics that only had a combined white population of 250,000 souls. With this great amount of treasure wasted, with a loss of 100,000 men and a steadily increasing list of casualties, England's statesmen refuse to grasp the hopelessness of the conquest, or recognize that the war has sown seeds

of hatred that would make the assimilation of the races under their government impossible.

No pen can adequately describe the struggles of these people or the physical torture they have endured for the past two years. Hunted like wolves for months, exposed to all weathers, barefooted, and with insufficient food, their endurance has been remarkable.

The authors of this work hope that they have, in their attempt to portray the struggle of these people touched a responsive chord in the heart of the reader, whose sympathy will go forth to these patriots in their distress.

If such an object has been attained we trust that it will be the cause of some practical outcome toward these true Republicans and in such, we shall feel our labor has been abundantly repaid.

Chapter XVIII

A chapter of brief deductions on modern war—Artillery—Shrapnel—Mobility—Heavy guns—A mounted infantryman—Scouts—Necessity of good shooting—Balloons—Barbed wire—A suggestion for American military experts in their own country.

IN the early part of the war the pronounced superiority of the quick-fire Creusot guns over the British Armstrong was necessarily a subject of self congratulation to the Federals. When Villebois Muriel, the French colonel, informed us that the modern French field-gun was as far ahead of our Creusot as the Creusot was ahead of the Armstrong, we felt a great respect for the modern French artillery. It took the Boer artilleryman little time to discover that the utmost range of the Armstrong was 3,500 yards, and with a range of 4,200 yards for their quick-fire Krupp, and upwards of 5,000 for their Creusot, they were not slow to take advantage of the situation and harass the British artillery unmercifully, until the arrival of the naval twelve pounders and the 4.7 guns, which introduced the habit of firing at everything within four or five miles, a matter of considerable discomfort to our previously jubilant burghers.

In point of numbers of cannon, the British had the best always. But their shrapnel shell was not so destructive as that of the Republicans, after the time fuse had been perfected. The first shrapnel used by the British was out of date, but that used later, had a very narrow distribution, probably on account of an overcharge. Unless exploded high it would tear a swath in the turf barely six inches wide and twenty-five feet long, striking with unnecessary force, but seldom doing any damage. They also tried a shrapnel which was to discharge its

contents from the rear of the shell, with the object of "firing back" over a position, at an enemy in trenches protected only on one side. These shells could be easily distinguished from the noise they made on explosion, the cap falling off beneath the point of discharge, but we never heard of any dangerous result from their use.

The mobility of a gun is the key to artillery practice. The power to move to or from a threatened position, covering the entire area with one gun, formed one of the features of Boer success. A commando, probably possessing but one gun, on taking a position, would place the field piece where the officer thought it would be the most effectual, but at the same time, stands were sought, excavated, and fortified in the numerous other positions which it might be thought necessary to defend. In this manner, with tireless artillerymen, every point would give the impression to the enemy, of containing artillery. A position, becoming known by the flash of the gun would call down the concentrated fire of the British cannon upon it, which only caused the gun to be moved and operated from a more favorable location while the enemy continued to bombard the former place, satisfied that they had at least silenced one gun.

The flash of a gun and dust of the recoil is the only means of locating the position of a modern smokeless gun. Baden-Powell used the ingenious idea of shooting through a blanket to avoid the flash and thereby disguise the positions of his battery. The Boers never imitated this example, but they well might, for in this respect the enterprising colonel's idea contains most practical sense.

The British field drill with artillery was always a subject of admiration to the burghers, and the effect of perfect discipline was much in evidence, but for practicability, when the ragged, ungroomed mules were hitched

to the Boer gun, they were seldom caught, except by a chance shot disabling the team. Outriders were abandoned early in the war, and the team was driven in a long swinging trot by rein from the limber, and a twelve-foot whip stock. In cases of emergency, the artillery crew, mounted on horseback would aid in forcing the mules into a gallop by riding on both sides of the team, and in this manner they would keep up for two or three hours in succession, with a command going ten miles an hour. A flying column in a gallop thus accompanied, was most inspiring, the feet of the many horses beating a rhythm to the clang of the gun until the threatened danger by pursuit or flanking was outdistanced.

The ordinary heavy field ordnance has to be separated from its firing bearings to transport it, but a weapon of great utility with large movements is a heavy gun with which this is not necessary. The British 4.7 guns were equipped this way but were very cumbersome to move, requiring thirty-two span of oxen. The Boer six-inch Creusot gun had to be transshipped, and the tripod being high and easily discernible, the enemy always knew when the gun was coming into, or going out of action. This caused it to be the object of fire that was not only dangerous but liable to injure the tripod, thereby completely crippling and probably causing the abandonment of the gun.

Traction engines may now be used between railroad depots and camps as we have before observed. It is, however, doubtful whether they will be found practicable on a protracted march, as the average engine requires water every two miles. Drawing their own coal, it is possible to keep pace with an infantry march, but in the positions it is found necessary to now place the guns in a hurried defense, manual labor or draught animals are

the only practical power. A traction engine would be as lost and helpless as a gun.

The most effectual gun used in the war was the maxim Vickers, firing a shell a little over a pound in weight. This was a most exasperating weapon, accurate, fast, and not likely to get out of order. It is built on a light carriage and is extremely mobile, capable of being placed in almost any position, able to accompany flying columns wherever a horse could travel, and up to 3,300 yards, tremendously demoralizing to an advancing or retreating force. Howitzers of large calibres are much to be dreaded on account of their trajectory, making any relaxation behind the trenches in a protracted siege almost impossible. The Colt Automatic gun used by the British, on account of its inclination to jam, was not pronounced a success.

From our deductions, made in this conflict, the successful aggressiveness of the future in open territory, will be operated in mobile columns and guided by efficient scouts. For such movements, the heaviest field ordnance should be discountenanced for a compromise between the small calibre Colt Automatic gun, and the Vickers-maxim. Such a weapon, employed during rapid descents, would carry consternation into the ranks of infantry, and prove demoralizing even to artillery within the range for which it is intended. It should be an automatic quick-fire, with telescopic sight, constructed of the finest gun-metal, somewhat on the principle of the Colt, and as light as safety, compatible with being carried on a horse or mule would warrant. The gun must be easily assembled and dissembled, and made to be handled in action, mounted on a pair of light wheels or a tripod, the calibre about forty-five, the bullets solid steel of the armor-piercing pattern, about one inch and a half long,

and the range not less than 3,000 yards. Such a weapon will be found quite practical, with a proportionate strengthening of the barrel, and the cartridge lengthened, thereby making allowance for the heavy charge necessary to propel the projectile the desired distance. It is known that concentrated Mauser fire, has been able within 1,000 yards' range, to silence batteries of field artillery, so it will be clearly seen that the possibilities of this weapon as outlined, it is difficult to over estimate. It would render a column almost immune from pursuit, and in a night attack it would do terrible execution before the demoralization could be remedied. Mounted in the fighting top of a ship such a gun would be a model, as its solid steel projectile, fired with great velocity would penetrate all steel not over an inch and a half in thickness.

Having reference to artillery it does not seem to be appreciated by military students that shell of the high explosive order of lyddite might be made more destructive by arming them with an element of uncertainty. For instance, if a number of shells were fired at an entrenched garrison, or even on the field, timed to explode at different periods of from five seconds to ten minutes after landing, it would create consternation among troops. It will only be necessary for one or two to be exploded unexpectedly, to make them an object of terror. Of the Republicans killed by shell fire, more have fallen victims to shell accidentally exploding after they descended than any other. Apart from the terrible concussion, the present lyddite shell is not very effective in the field, for while it stains the skin, creates nausea, and its gas asphyxiates, besides setting dry grass on fire, it invariably destroys by blowing to pieces the very material with which it is proposed to do the damage.

There is a good deal to be desired in the improvement of shells. The shrapnel of the English inflicts a severe wound, because of its dimension, but the shell contains a limited quantity, and consequently hits but few. If a piece of quarter-inch iron, perfectly square were to be cut off by quarter-inches and packed solid into a shrapnel shell, the wound inflicted would be little worse than that of the present, but the damage to the enemy would be about five times as great, because of the wider zone.

It is a peculiar fact that nearly every army has adopted different methods of arming, drilling and organizing their mounted troops. The American regular army comes nearer our idea of perfection than any previously brought forward, but we would much like to give our views from deductions drawn in this war. Necessarily we advocate as many as possible mounted men in any form of warfare, outside of permanent fortifications, to be composed of mounted infantrymen, armed with a heavy calibre revolver, or one with a small calibre, using an expansive bullet, and a three-quarter rifle, to be fitted with telescopic sights. Something to take the place of the unwieldy shovel carried by the British engineers, is urgently needed, and we propose to supply the want by having the butt of every rifle capped with a finely tempered, adjustable steel hook, so fitted with a strong steel handle that it could be taken out and used for levering stones not too heavy, and arranged so that the discarding of the tool would not render the rifle butt the less comfortable for the shoulder.

If no form of soft-nose or expansive bullet is used, the calibre of the English Lee-Metford 303, is none too small to give it a decisive stopping power, the present adopted Boer Mauser, 270 calibre losing much in this case. If warfare is to be waged ruthlessly for the quick-

Boer Howitzer Gun

est and most convincing results, nothing can supersede the soft-nosed bullet, which combines the two essential qualities of lightness and destructiveness, and is preferable in being more accurate than the ordinary dum-dum, for the reason of its perfect spherical shape following the pattern of the nickel-coated bullet, avoiding the air-resisting or snub-nosed model, which is necessarily deficent in accuracy and penetration. Of this ammunition it is practicable for a mounted man to carry from two to four hundred rounds without fatigue to himself or his horse, and obviating the lack of ammunition so much to be deplored when the emergency arrives. Bandoliers and belts seem the easiest method of carrying the ammunition, each stowing sixty cartridges. They are convenient in action and easily disposed of or donned in moments of inaction. Any amount considered necessary over two hundred rounds, could be carried in bags, in the saddle pockets, to be attached to the belt when required.

There is no method now known that can equal the Mauser clip for rapidity in reloading, the Lee-Metford being as far behind that gun in this point as the Krag-Jorgensen is behind the Lee-Metford. For saddles the American fork or tree should be used, being more durable, commodious and healthful for the horse's back, and fitted with the American wooden stirrup in preference to the thin iron hoop used by the European cavalry, which would obviate all danger of a wounded man being dragged when unhorsed, and give the feet both warmth and comfort. To the saddle a leather bucket on the right side and slung level with the stirrup, in which to place the butt of the gun on going into action, saves the mounted man from carrying his weapon across the saddle and bears much of the weight. To carry

on horseback for many hours a weapon slung to the shoulders is both tiresome and inconvenient.

Swords for both officers and men should be entirely discarded, the officers being given the preference of carrying a carbine or only directing the fire of the men with his field glasses, of which there should always be a few pair with each expedition in scouting. These corps should be drilled in small bodies, great care being exercised to obtain responsible non-commissioned officers, able to take complete charge and act decisively whenever they became in any way isolated with their troop from their superior officer. The men should be taught to operate independently in small bodies without relying on outside aid, being drilled in charges for cover, hurried dismounting, and care of horses before going in action, the bridles of each four horses being tied with members of the troop left in charge to attend to their needs, detach wounded horses, or be prepared for sudden retreat or any emergency that might transpire.

They should also be drilled in rudimentary scouting, trailing tracks, reading signs of smoke, dust or anything that denoted a foreign movement or presence. They should be taught the value of care to a horse, such as washing the backs, riding at ease without slouching, and the cause and cure of incidental ailments, as colic, founders, interfering, etc.

For equipment, khaki or dull green for both uniforms and tents, fawn-colored felt hats, U. S. A. pattern, stout, neat, high-cut waterproof shoes, to fasten with clasps, and surmounted with leather leggins (lined or not according to climate) and also fastened with clasps to economize time in washing, rest, etc. Breeches in summer and trousers in winter should be made with straps and buckles at both hips to obviate the necessity of a

belt or suspender. This must not be thought to render the belt unnecessary as we strongly recommend one. Let it be of strong linen cord, so arranged that it can be unwound and made to do service as a picket line, or, with it hitched to a light maxim, and made fast to the saddle the troopers could gallop the gun out of action and danger. Underclothing as needed, nothing of course being used but natural, uncolored wool; a four-fold saddle blanket capable of use as a horse blanket at night, and all leather tan-colored to preserve the material. A full-length military blanket to be carried behind the saddle, and also a mackintosh coat lined, but light, and khaki-colored, the blanket, before being fastened to the saddle, rolled in a rubber sheet seven feet by three, of the same color. Saddlebags, on the fore of the saddle should accommodate the rations carried, for which small canvas sacks could be supplied for the different articles, and also an emergency ration, made after the British model, composed of a highly concentrated chocolate and beef, only to be used in case of necessity.

Light, strong, two-wheeled carts drawn by two or four mules should be available to carry into any position found necessary, rations, ammunition, hand-maxims, or medical comforts for the wounded, and capable of accompanying the command wherever desired, with sufficient munitions to make that force independent of aught but water and forage for three days, and able to retreat as precipitately as the cavalry, if such a course was expedient.

Having briefly told what we think the successful modern unit must be, and not overlooking a stout jack-knife, and well-covered enamel canteen, there is still a caution to add: neither the man nor his horse should be loaded with an ounce more than is necessary!

Scouts will always form one of the most important features of modern warfare, as the entire relaxation of an army depends on this part of the service being efficient. There are different features to be contended with in every country and climate, which would make fixed rules for these men impossible, but there will always be a rudimentary training which is essential beyond that advocated for the mounted infantrymen. For day work scouts must be trained to recognize any track left by man or animal, and to tell the approximate number of wagons, guns, horsemen or infantry that have crossed or traversed the route his duties assigned him to. He should know about the period they had passed, their probable starting point and destination, and be able to follow, noting if any forces had reinforced them or been detached. He should be capable of judging for the use of the army, the water and grass in the territory he traveled, and draw conclusions from all disturbances, such as dust rising in the distance, the alarm of wild animals, and domestic stock, particularly horses, and he should know enough to read the significance of dead camp-fires, judging from the camp the character of the late occupants, if armed, with what weapons, whether they had shot, whether they slept, how often they had eaten, and with what stock they were accompanied, all of which can be estimated by the traces in or around the fire; broken bushes, the peculiarly different tires of wagons and artillery, a dropped cartridge, and similar observations, denoting indications to the scout, from which chapters of incident may be drawn, telling of the army to which the force belonged, and their probable object in being thus isolated. Then there is the duty of protecting an army on the march, watching every movement in the van, on the flanks or in the rear; the quickly-

gained knowledge of riding where he is the least conspicuous, yet keeping everything in his own view, avoiding all contrasting background or prominent ridges, where he is expected to scout by the enemy. Then, the inevitable advance within the zone of the enemy's fire, with a full knowledge of his existence, but with orders to prove it. He advances by alternate paces of cautiousness and recklessness, expecting every moment to receive assurances of his foe's presence with a probable fatal volley, yet he must continue until the volley has put the point beyond doubt. Perhaps the hidden force permits him to ride within two hundred yards, conscious of their own immunity until the dénouement could hardly end in any other manner than casualty to himself or horse, yet he is a scout, and scouts must ascertain the position of the enemy.

Horses, well trained are a great aid in this service, and they should be taught to lie or stand wherever left alone. To overcome their habit of whinnying at night when hearing other horses, they could wear a light perforated leather nose-bag or muzzle, which would restrain such impulses, with a considerable increase in the peace of mind of the scout, who would possibly be several hundred yards away, listening to the conversation of the enemy's picket. Night work is the most unpleasant but much the most effectual, and it is as necessary at night as by daylight, to avoid riding on skylines and any unnecessary jingling equipment of the saddle or bridle. With common sense and nerve, the night work offers far more adequate return than that done by day, but we should wish the reader to bear in mind that his horse is the important feature in a case of getting away, and he cannot lavish too much attention on this friend. Whenever permissible, the saddle should be removed to rest

his back; or the bit, to enable him to graze, as such discomforts tend to make him restless, and consequently a noisy and dangerous companion. When the scout has attained the condition outlined, there remains another accomplishment to complete his education. He must be taught to understand and answer readily to a soundless sign, in short schooled in a complete code of noiseless and practically invisible signals. Firecrackers about a half ounce in weight, making the sound of a rifle on discharge, might be found very useful, supplied to scouts for the purpose of lessening the danger to themselves at night, while feeling an enemy's position and strength. By being thrown from a catapult some distance from the operator, they would help to withdraw a fire from themselves when heard indistinctly. With these points in mind and a previous knowledge of weather indications, and locality, an ordinary man can hope to be an efficient scout.

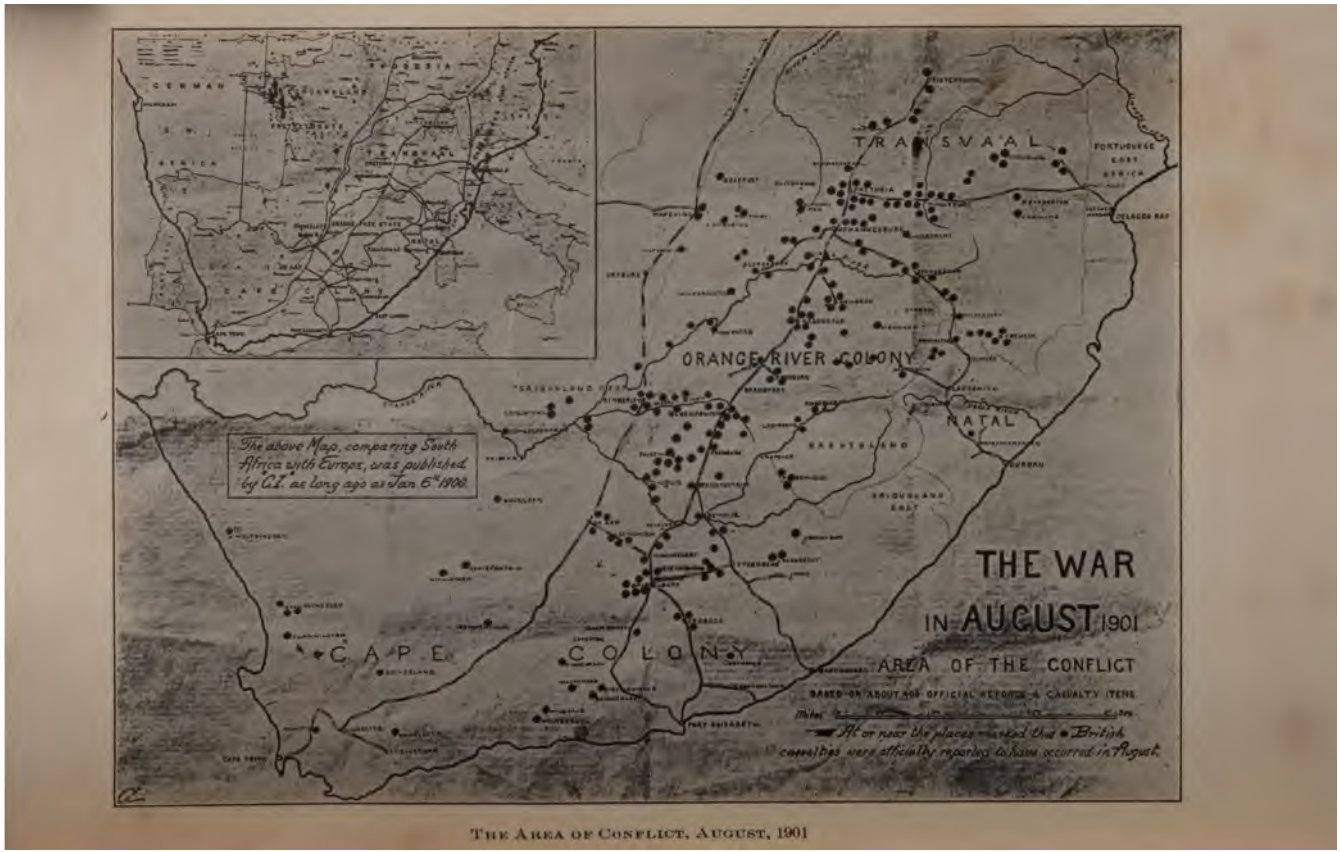
On the merits of rifles upon our impression, there is very little to say, beyond that already treated. We found the Krag-Jorgensen the best sighted, and up to 600 yards the most accurate, otherwise, it was the inferior of the Mauser in every respect. The Mauser action and reloading is the most rapid, but in its lock and barrel inferior to the Lee-Metford. The perfect rifle, in our opinion would be a combination between the Manlacher and the Lee-Metford, of the 303 calibre, the action of the former with the lock and barrel of the latter, combining the greatest accuracy and rapidity. The use of the dum-dum does not seem to indicate that war is to become more humane than it has been, and if the most destructive ammunition is to be advocated, then we unhesitatingly suggest the soft-nose, or lead-tipped bullet, with the nickel base.

Among the nations except England, there has been a disposition to treat lightly the many lessons taught by this war. It must not be thought from anything we have said that the splendid defense of the citizens of the Republics warrants the assumption that we advocate an entire reliance on citizen-soldiers. On the contrary it is probable that an efficient army lightly equipped, and subsisting on the country invaded, could considerably encroach on the resources of a nation, relying on citizens for defense, before a condition of readiness could be reached. A well-equipped and perfectly trained skeleton army is of paramount importance to any nation whose territory offers the remotest possibility of successful invasion, and this applies with special force to the United States of America. Whatever their tactics no army can succeed whose shooting is inferior to that of their opponents. The ideal soldier we have in mind must be taught to shoot straight at stationary or moving objects, and is expected to hit those objects at distances of his own judgment. A soldier's efficiency must not be judged on his general bearing, or his precision in swinging his gun, and marking time on drill. These, beyond the implied manual training, are only secondary. If he is opposed to one who shoots better, he will of a certainty perish. In every army there could be grades for marksmen, and inducements held out to every man by advancement and money prizes. Practice incessantly throughout the year is necessary, and no quantity of ammunition so expended can be considered wasted. Mounted men should be required to gallop at full speed, suddenly dismount and fire ten shots at a moving object without being told the distance. If he make one hit, he is adjudged a marksman, and if two, three or four, his reward increased in proportion, and placed in line of promotion over the less

skillful. We go further and recommend the adoption of a standard and that every recruit be given one year to qualify, after which period failure to do so can be followed by retirement. A small army of perfect fighters will be found under all conditions in war, a far more reliable arm, than a huge unwieldy force, made up of useless men and equipments.

It might be argued: "But have you not extolled the defensive measures of the South African Republics?" In answer we would modestly submit that the Boer is a unique citizen soldier, because he is a born hunter, and did not fight as a citizen, but as an accumulation of hunters. It is improbable that his equal will be found in future modern wars, because the conditions which created him are unlikely to again exist.

Experience has taught that cowardice in war is the exception and not the rule. By this we mean that nearly any body of men will advance from a thousand to two thousand yards under fire, taking shelter as they progress until within striking distance of the opponent, and therefore very little can be gained by commencing action with small arms at long range, unless, of course the enemy is massed, which seems now, unlikely; or in such overwhelming force that there is no intention to court decisive action. What should be aimed at is to strike a sudden blow at short range, say from 400 yards, and deliver such a shock as will, temporarily, at least, unbalance the morale of the foe. This must not be taken to mean volleys, for volleys, we consider, ineffectual, but rifle shots in rapid succession, each being aimed at a man. Approximate shooting is discountenanced at all times, and for small arms it cannot be said that any rifle at present in service is more than approximate beyond 1,300 yards. Anything to the contrary is an exception and therefore unreliable,


The above Map, comparing South Africa with Europe, was published by C.I. as long ago as Jan 6th 1900.
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IN AUGUST 1901
AREA OF THE CONFLICT
BASED ON ABOUT 400 OFFICIAL REPORTS & CASUALTY ITEMS
At or near the places marked thus • British casualties were officially reported to have occurred in August.
TRANSVAAL
ORANGE RIVER COLONY
NATAL
CAPE COLONY
BASUTOLAND
GERMAN S.W. AFRICA
RHODESIA
PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA

THE AREA OF CONFLICT, AUGUST, 1901

because a lone man is too imperfectly visible beyond that range. If there is artillery or machine guns, the opening range of fire should be increased, and men and horses shot down and put out of action without delay.

The German military authorities have realized this feature of the sudden shock, and with their characteristic thoroughness have tried to arrive at the most positive method of reaching it. It is only surprising they have selected an unwieldy lance, which, as a weapon for the object contemplated is, in our opinion, suicidal.

The main object of flying columns will be to suddenly attack armies on the move, and make rapid descents into an enemy's country to destroy isolated garrisons, communications, etc. In order to minimize the danger of this, even the most efficient scout cannot be depended upon, but an auxiliary, employed in the form of a balloon kept constantly in service with the force threatened, will considerably increase the safety of those bodies. Balloons were of great value to the British in South Africa, and their utility demonstrated beyond doubt. At night they are of a special value as a means of ascertaining the strength of the enemy by observations of their campfires.

The automobile comprises an element of far-reaching possibilities and is worthy of serious consideration. As they were not employed in this war we cannot offer comments drawn from experience, but we do know that there have been cases where an automobile would have been of immense value to the Republicans as ambulances, and for purposes of running ammunition or light machine guns, to a vital point in an open country they could be used to great advantage in this manner. No army should be considered equipped which is not supplied with a goodly number of rolls of barbed wire, not too heavy

for two horsemen between them to spin out across a field at a gallop. Many of these laid loosely, or pegged at intervals might easily prove the death of an excursion, as it is a certain obstruction to cavalry and horse artillery, and equal to hundreds of rifles.

We humbly present the information contained believing it to be worthy of study and thought to all who regard seriously the chances of modern war. France and Germany by the reports of their fall military manœuvres seem to have scorned every lesson their attachés saw the British pay the price of in this war. In so doing we believe they place themselves at a disadvantage with the proud power that has been willing to learn modern war from the South African farmers. We feel that it is demonstrated that countries like South Africa, North America, Brazil and Australia, given a temperate or torrid climate, and defended by the citizens once armed with a modern rifle, and satisfied with the justice of their cause, are incapable of subjection or control, regardless of the loss of things that make up the supposed riches of nations. The lance and the sabre has seen the day of its utility, and with equal division of artillery and forces the bayonet could be made as harmless. With guns sufficient to prevent the placing of artillery close enough to use cannister and suppress the fire of the enemy's batteries, nothing, night or day could live to cross a space of a hundred yards before trenches defended by two tier of men capable of reinforcement, familiar with the use of the rifle and determined to do their duty.

Five hundred desperate men, armed with rifles using the same ammunition as the government, placed in Colorado, with two machine guns, and led by men knowing such warfare and country, could cause the mobilization of the American army, form the inhabitants in posses,

terrorize the whole west, inflict millions of dollars damage in life and railroad property, and finally, if necessary, escape over one of the borders without capture, to return when those slower moving states, with their more limited resources pressed them. A force of men with a price on their heads, or desperate from other causes, familiar with horses and camp life, and in sufficient numbers to sweep by or capture an outpost, present possibilities far more formidable than the Apaches which the American government had so much trouble to suppress. This supposition flavoring of the dime novel, is not presented by us without a knowledge of the territory suggested, and is worthy of contemplation to those who think that the Boer tactics are entirely accounted for by the inefficiency of the English generals. These commandos work in a territory far inferior to the west for such warfare, and in a country where an effort has been made to denude it of everything living or growing that could in any way sustain man or beast.

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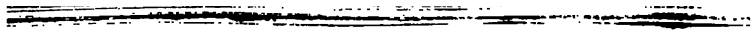

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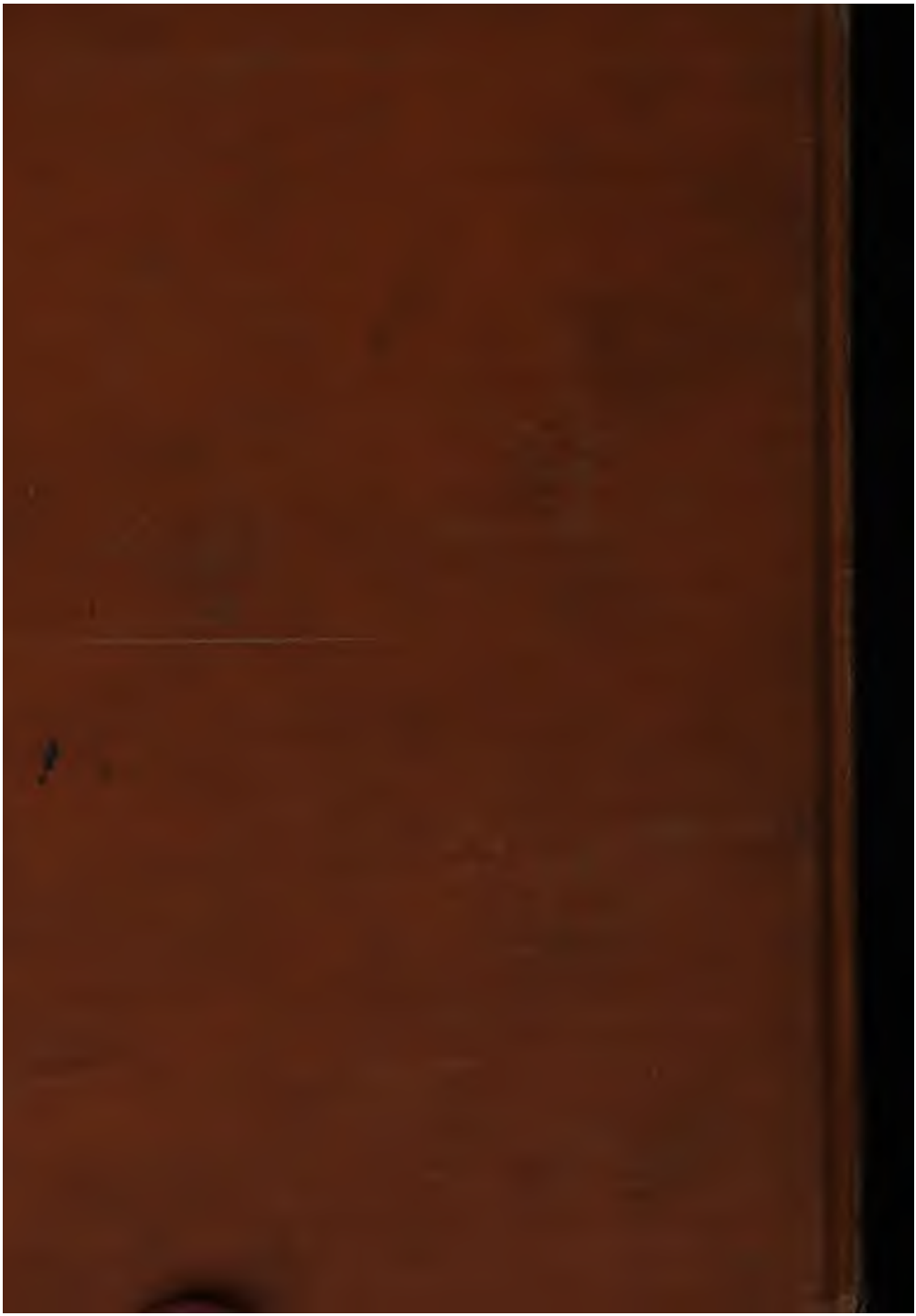
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